

**TYPHOID IN UPPINGHAM:
A VICTORIAN TOWN AND SCHOOL IN
CRISIS**

1875-1877

NIGEL RICHARDSON

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

2006



CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	i
THESIS ABSTRACT	iii
ABBREVIATIONS	iv
LOCATIONS FOR REFERENCE MATERIAL IN FOOTNOTES	v
NOTES	vi
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTERS:	
1. TOWN AND SCHOOL: 1875	26
2. LOCAL SOCIETY AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT	58
3. LOCAL MEDICINE AND LOCAL DOCTORS	101
4. TYPHOID: THE FIRST TWO OUTBREAKS 1875	134
5. WINTER 1875-6	169
6. SPRING 1876	207
7. SUMMER 1876	236
8. AUTUMN, WINTER AND SPRING 1876-7	279
CONCLUSION	313
MAPS: UPPINGHAM: LOCATION	330
UPPINGHAM IN 1876	331
BORTH: LOCATION	332
BORTH: CENTRAL AREA	333
APPENDICES:	
1. DRAMATIS PERSONAE	334
2. THRING AND UPPINGHAM SCHOOL BEFORE 1875	335
3. UPPINGHAM UNION MEMBERS 1875	350
4. NINETEENTH CENTURY TYPHOID, AND DISEASE IN BOARDING SCHOOLS	351
5. BORTH: MARCH 1876 – MARCH 1877	368
6. THE AFTERMATH	395
7. ABSTRACT OF SUMS RAISED BY RSAs	411
BIBLIOGRAPHY	412

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe particular debt to six people who have assisted me in this project. Father Cormac Rigby, who wrote his D.Phil. thesis on Thring in the 1960s and who has done much more unpublished work on him since, has given me much in time and expertise since I revived my own work in 2001. Professor Anne Hardy responded enthusiastically to my first enquiry about turning this work into a research thesis, and has been a very helpful supervisor. Dr Elizabeth Hurren and Professor Alan Rogers generously contributed many suggestions in the final stages of my writing-up, and Peter Lane helped me to piece together information about the Uppingham community in 1870s. Jerry Rudman, the school archivist, has patiently answered endless queries

The late Bryan Matthews and Geoffrey Frowde, (two colleagues when I was on the staff of Uppingham School from 1971-89) first encouraged me in this research, along with Dr Malcolm Tozer. Dr Philip Pattenden of Peterhouse, Cambridge and Auriol Thomson of Glaston, Rutland provided much factual material about Revd Barnard Smith, and Wendy Wales advised me on her family ancestor, Revd William Wales. The search for the elusive Dr Haviland was assisted by Professor Frank A. Barrett in Canada, Jon Edwards, Andrew Haviland and Charles Hillman in the UK, and by Chris Haviland and Brant and Virginia Taylor in the USA.

The staff of several record offices have been very helpful, especially those in Bridgwater, Leicester, Northampton, Aberystwyth and the Isle of Man. Dr John Davis in Oxford responded to my enquiry on local government financial issues, and David Sharp to

another about correspondence in the *Lancet*. Phil Rayner of the Rutland Museum, Oakham provided lines of enquiry about neighbouring towns to Uppingham, and Dr Paul Carter of the National Archives (PRO/TNA) guided me in respect of the Local Government Board (LGB) papers.

I have been singularly fortunate to live close to the superb resources and staff of the Cambridge University library. Malcolm Underwood at St John's College provided further material on Haviland, and Dr Gillian Sutherland and Dr Simon Szreter gave me help early on with selecting secondary material. Dr Virginia Warren advised on medical and public health issues. Mrs Karen Gibson has assisted me with typing and compilation.

Finally I owe thanks to three Uppingham headmasters - the late Coll Macdonald, (1975-82) who gave me a reduced teaching timetable at the start of my research in 1976, Nick Bomford (1982-91) who allowed me to pursue this remarkable story further, and Dr Stephen Winkley (1991-2006) for his encouragement recently. I am also indebted to the governors of the Perse School, Cambridge (who have provided far more encouragement for me than Thring's trustees ever gave him), for giving me four months' sabbatical leave in 2002-3 during which much of the material was assembled. My wife, herself one of the successors to those Uppingham trustees who gave Thring so much concern, has provided many constructive suggestions as the text has taken shape.

Nigel Richardson

Cambridge, November 2006.

THESIS ABSTRACT

This thesis is a micro-historical study of central-local government relations and public health through the experience of the people of Uppingham - a small (and unusually well-documented) town which contained a boarding school, and which was hit three times by typhoid in 1875-6. It examines the conduct of those involved in town and school, the economic dependence of the former on the latter, and the opposition to higher rates to pay for sanitary improvement by a local ratepayer *shopocracy*. It compares the sanitary state of the community with others nearby, and Uppingham School with comparable schools of that era. It shows how the extent of improvement was often determined by business considerations rather than medical judgements, and that local personalities and events frequently drove national policy in practice.

These events came in the years immediately after the passing of the Public Health Acts of 1872 and 1875, as sanitary improvement started to move from being a voluntary matter to a statutory one. The thesis explores rivalries between headmaster and Rural Sanitary Authority (RSA), a newly-appointed Medical Officer of Health (MOH) and the school doctor, and between the local doctors as they fought to preserve their economic territory. It examines the level of effectiveness of the Local Government Board (LGB) in overseeing improvements. It seeks to complement work already done by historians on public health development in cities and large towns.

While it confirms the leadership qualities of headmaster Edward Thring (who took the dramatic decision to remove his entire school to the Welsh coast for a year), it also shows that that the picture presented by previous writers of a wronged school battling against the hostility of the uncaring town RSA is far too simplistic.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE TEXT

BMJ	The <i>British Medical Journal</i>
DMOP	District Medical Officer of the Poor.
FRCP	Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians
FRCS	Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons.
GP	General Practitioner.
JP	Justice of the Peace.
LGAO	Local Government Act Office.
LGB	Local Government Board.
LRCP	Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians.
LSA	Licentiate of the Society of Apothecaries.
MO	Medical Officer.
MOH	Medical Officer of Health.
MRCS	Member of the Royal College of Surgeons.
PWLB	Public Works Loan Board.
RSA	Rural Sanitary Authority.
SPCK	Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge.
UA	Uppingham (School) Archive.
ULHSG	Uppingham Local History Studies Group.
USA	Urban Sanitary Authority.
USM	The <i>Uppingham School Magazine</i> .
USR	The <i>Uppingham School Roll</i> .

LOCATIONS FOR REFERENCE MATERIAL IN FOOTNOTES

BPL	Bridgwater Public Library.
CA	Ceredigion Archives, Aberystwyth.
CUL	Cambridge University Library.
MNH	Manx National Heritage Library, Douglas, Isle of Man.
NCL	Northampton Central Library.
NLW	National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.
NRO	Northamptonshire Record Office.
PRO/TNA	Public Record Office/National Archives.
RCM	Rutland County Museum, Oakham.
ROLLR	Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland.
SPL	Stamford Public Library.
UA	Uppingham (School) Archive.

The place of publication of books etc is London unless otherwise stated.

NOTES

1) Nomenclature

Throughout the text I have identified the Uppingham guardians by the collective term *RSA*, or occasionally as the *Authority*. In the absence of any minute book for the sanitary sub-committee it is impossible to draw a precise distinction between its activities and those of the town's guardians as a whole. The RSA's members were responsible for their actions to central government, the Local Government Board. I have referred to this London-based body as the *LGB*, or occasionally as the *Board*.

2) Prices

Converting the prices and wages of 130 years ago accurately into modern figures is more complex than it might seem. According to the Office for National Statistics, on a composite price index with January 1974 as 100, 1875 is registered at 9.8, and 2003 at 715.2. Thus a £ in 1875 equates to roughly £75 at today's (2006) values.

3) Dramatis Personae

An aide memoire of the leading characters and their roles is given in appendix 1.

INTRODUCTION

1) CONTEXT

Between 1840 and 1900, far-reaching developments took place at international and national level in the field of public health. Internationally, it was a time of major epidemiological discoveries, with the identification of the bacteria causing major diseases by scientists like Robert Koch and Georg Gaffky.¹ In Britain William Farr demonstrated the link between epidemics and high population density,² and John Snow and William Budd demonstrated the links between infectious disease such as cholera and typhoid, and polluted water.³

In cities throughout the land, work began on radically cleansing streets following the Great Stink of London in 1858 and the pioneering work of men such as Edwin Chadwick⁴ and Joseph Bazalgette.⁵ Successive governments of both parties passed radical legislation to accelerate such improvements – passing the Public Health Acts of 1848, 1872 and 1875 and setting up the Royal Sanitary Commission in 1866.

Inspectorates were set up to control many areas of economic life. New MOHs such as John Simon⁶ and William Henry Duncan began work, firstly in London and Liverpool, later in all large cities and finally in country areas. Meanwhile there were sweeping reforms in the registration and training of doctors. Popular expectations

¹ Cartwright, Frederick F: *A Social History of Medicine* (1977) pp. 123, 140-1.

² Eyler, John M: *Victorian Social Medicine: The Ideas and Methods of William Farr* (1979).

³ Hardy, Anne: *Health & Medicine in Britain since 1860* (Basingstoke, 2001) p. 25. See Snow, SJ: 'John Snow MD 1813-1858: The Emergence of the Medical Profession' (Keele University Ph.D. thesis, 1995), and Goodall, Edward W: *William Budd MD, FRS, The Bristol Epidemiologist* (Bristol, 1936).

⁴ Finer, SE: *The Life and Times of Sir Edwin Chadwick 1800-1890* (1952).

⁵ Halliday: Stephen, *The Great Stink of London: Sir Joseph Bazalgette and the Cleansing of the Victorian Capital* (Stroud, 2001).

⁶ See Lambert, Royston: *Sir John Simon 1816-1904 and English Social Administration* (1963), and Frazer, WM: *Duncan of Liverpool* (1947).

about better public health grew rapidly, but the means to satisfy them amounted to a sustained challenge to previous assumptions about the limits of government centralization and state interference.⁷

Within this period of great change lies a sub-era of less than twenty years. The LGB was set up in 1871 in an attempt to ensure that public health authorities in every area carried out government's wishes.⁸ Yet until the Local Government Act of 1888 set up county councils, rural local government depended upon what Sir Edward Goschen called 'a chaos as regards authorities, a chaos as regards rates, and a worse chaos than all as regards areas'.⁹

This 'chaos' existed in the form of Justices of the Peace (JPs) - volunteers, self-appointed, and often local landowners with no directly relevant qualifications.¹⁰ They could call on far fewer material and fiscal resources than the professional administrators who would replace them, and they were answerable to governments which had far fewer technological, communications and other means than nowadays to ensure that Parliament's will was carried out.

⁷ Hoppen, K Theodore: *The Mid-Victorian Generation 1846-1886* (Oxford, 1998) pp. 91-124.

⁸ There is a large volume of work on the LGB, esp. Bellamy, Christine: *Administering Central-Local Relations, 1871-1919: The Local Government Board in its Fiscal and Cultural Context* (Manchester, 1988) esp. pp. 111-165. See also MacDonagh, O: *Early Victorian Government 1830-1870* (1977), and in this thesis, ch. 2 section 7. The early years of the LGB are described by Lambert: *Simon*, and in Macleod, Roy M: *Treasury Control and Social Administration: A Study of Establishment Growth at the Local Government Board 1871-1905* (Occasional papers on Social Administration 23, 1968) and *Government and Expertise: Specialists, Administrators and Professionals 1860-1919* (1988). See also Sutherland, Gillian: *Studies in the Growth of Nineteenth Century Government* (1972).

⁹ *Hansard* CCV 3 April 1871: pp. 1115-1143. George Joachim Goschen (1831-1907): President of the Poor Law Board 1868-70, First Lord of the Admiralty 1871-4, later Chancellor of the Exchequer.

¹⁰ Hurren, Elizabeth T: "Poor Law Versus Public Health: Diphtheria, Sanitary Reform and the 'Crusade' against Outdoor Relief 1870-1900" *Social History of Medicine* 18 No. 1 (2005) pp. 403-4.

It was during the two decades which spanned the first Public Health Act and the Local Government Act that Uppingham's typhoid outbreak occurred. In many ways Uppingham was a typical small market town in a very traditional rural county (Rutland) - conservative in outlook, run by tight local networks, and an economically precarious community. But it was unusual in one respect: there existed right at the heart of it one of the new boarding schools which were springing up all over England in the wake of new-found Victorian economic prosperity, its pupils drawn from successful middle-class families all over the country. As a result, the school had become increasingly separated from its local grammar school origins.¹¹ This had caused underlying tensions between the leaders of school and town which exploded when their community was struck by an epidemic in 1875.

2) LOCAL THEMES

a) UPPINGHAM AND BORTH

The typhoid outbreak within Uppingham School, which led to its evacuation to Borth on the Welsh coast for a year from April 1876, has long been known to historians of education. Its existing historiography describes events almost entirely from the viewpoint of its headmaster (Revd. Edward Thring) and his colleagues - depicting the town authorities as vindictive, supine and incompetent. In the words of one writer: 'The townsfolk, though they owed their prosperity entirely to the school, were jealous of Thring's predominating influence and grudged spending a penny on improvements if they could avoid it'.¹²

¹¹ See ch. 1 section 4, and appendix 2 section 3.

¹² Hoyland, Geoffrey: *The Man Who Made a School: Thring of Uppingham* (1946) p. 84 - although Hoyland's hagiographical book is far from the best of those so far written on Thring.

This view is unsurprising, given that there is no shortage of primary sources extolling the achievements of Thring's thirty-four year period as headmaster of Uppingham. These are dominated by his own writings, and especially by extracts from his diaries and letters,¹³ as well as a continuous run of volumes of the *Uppingham School Magazine (USM)*.¹⁴ The pro-school view which they give was reinforced by his disciples, who produced a corpus of secondary literature in the years after his death.¹⁵ The specific events of 1875-7 were written up in both the *diaries* and the *USM*, and they became enshrined in folklore shortly after the school's return, thanks to JH Skrine's short, romanticised account *Uppingham by the Sea*.¹⁶ This was reflected in a number of works over the next century, including books about Uppingham School by Bryan Matthews¹⁷ and Donald Leinster-Mackay¹⁸ respectively, at the time of the School's quatercentenary (1984) and the centenary of Thring's death (1987). The latter in particular describes the Borth adventure in terms which reflect Thring's messianic views about it;¹⁹ he frequently likened the school's upheaval to the wanderings of the Israelites in the Old Testament,²⁰ and referred to it as the school's *Great Deliverance*.²¹

Other writers about Victorian boarding schools as a whole described it in similarly graphic terms: TW Bamford gives a racy account of Thring arriving in Borth for the first time 'on the day of a hurricane', and describes Rugby's earlier dispersal (1841)

¹³ Parkin, GR, (ed): *Edward Thring, Headmaster of Uppingham School: Life, Diary and Letters* 2 vols. (1898).

¹⁴ Bound copies available in UA.

¹⁵ See bibliography.

¹⁶ Skrine, JH: *Uppingham by the Sea* (1878).

¹⁷ Matthews, Bryan: *By God's Grace: A History of Uppingham School* (Maidstone, 1984).

¹⁸ Leinster-Mackay, Donald: *The Educational World of Edward Thring* (1987).

¹⁹ Matthews: *By God's Grace* pp. 108-9, Leinster-Mackay: *Educational World* p. 12.

²⁰ Tozer, Malcolm: 'Thring at Uppingham-by-the-Sea: The Lesson of the Borth Sermons' *History of Education Society Bulletin* 36 (Autumn 1985) pp. 39-44.

²¹ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 pp. 66-68: Thring to Parkin 10 April 1877.

to the Lake District and elsewhere as ‘a Sunday-afternoon picnic compared with the moonlight treks of the old dissenting academies, or even with Thring’s epic flight from Uppingham to Borth’.²² Alicia Percival wrote in her 1973 study of Victorian public school heads that Borth was a pivotal moment in Thring’s notable career: his educational philosophy was reinforced, his critics were confounded and as a result of the exodus to Borth, ‘the headmaster’s position was entirely altered’.²³

b) THE HISTORICAL REPUTATION OF THE UPPINGHAM RSA

While the evacuation to Borth remains an act of heroic imagination (unique in its scale, in the history of schools at that time), the concentration on the Welsh dimension has diverted too much of the attention of historians away from events in Uppingham itself. The traditional view of the town’s RSA is too simplistic: the difficulties it faced were much more complex than has hitherto been appreciated. This was acknowledged by one of Thring’s successors, Martin Lloyd (headmaster 1944-65) after reading Geoffrey Hoyland’s draft manuscript:²⁴ ‘We agreed that your account of the typhoid epidemic lets the school down rather too lightly. Not all the blame rested with the board of guardians.’²⁵

3) THEMES RELATING TO PUBLIC HEALTH

A study of such local events, evolving public opinions and small-town politics can teach historians a great deal about the workings of a rural community in an age of

²² Bamford, TW: *Rise of the Public Schools: A Study of Boys’ Public Boarding Schools in England and Wales from 1837 to the Present Day* (1967) pp. 205-6.

²³ Percival, Alicia: *Very Superior Men* (1973) p. 191. Thring is widely regarded as second only to Dr Thomas Arnold of Rugby in the history of Victorian independent schools: he had been under pressure from critics in the years up to 1875 over his refusal to espouse the philathleticism which was becoming popular in schools comparable to Uppingham. See appendix 6 section 8.

²⁴ Hoyland: *The Man Who Made a School* (1946).

²⁵ UA: Lloyd to Hoyland: 18 April 1945.

critical change. Most of the professional work in the public health field has so far centred around cities and large towns; by contrast, Uppingham, with its unusually large array of documentation and its network of very active local historians offers an unusual opportunity to examine small-town issues and relationships in depth.²⁶ There are town-school issues too: how far did the crisis threaten the delicate economic relationship between town and school, and with it the entire financial stability of the town itself? To what extent did it put many long-standing friendships and some professional relationships at risk? How far did landed and landlord vested interest determine local opinion? How dominant was ratepayer opinion in determining the town's response to the school's demands for help?

The epidemic also strained the sinews of the existing local government structure to the very limit. Could the Uppingham guardians possibly cope with the demands being placed on them, and the level of expertise (and commitment of time) required of them? Just how clear were their powers, and the expectations placed on them in this period?

The study throws new light on the pressures facing local general practitioners (GPs) and the newly-appointed MOHs in rural areas in the 1870s.²⁷ In Dr Thomas Bell, the school possessed a medical officer who was, in many ways, an archetypal rural GP

²⁶ See Traylen, Tony: 1) *Turnpikes and Royal Mail of Rutland* (Stamford, 1982): 2) *Oakham in Rutland* (Stamford, 1982) and 3) *Uppingham in Rutland* (Stamford, 1982). See also Uppingham Local History Studies Group: 1) *Canon Aldred's Historical Notes* (Uppingham, 1999): 2) *Uppingham in 1802: A Year to Remember?* (Uppingham, 2002): 3) *Uppingham in 1851: A Night in the Life of a Thriving Town* (Uppingham, 2001): 4) *Uppingham at War: Uppingham in Living Memory: Snapshots of Uppingham in the Twentieth Century* (Uppingham, 2005).

²⁷ Digby, Anne: *The Evolution of British General Practice* (1999) p. 18: 'When the whole town turned out for the funeral of a well-loved and respected GP, it was a sure sign that (he) had been a prime exponent of the art of manipulating a local environment in order to construct an ecological niche within the community'.

the immediate era after national qualifications were standardised.²⁸ To what extent did he, by his determined support for the school and his inveterate letter writing, lift the lid on many local issues during these critical three years? What drove him on: status and self-interest, an awareness of the threat to his economic livelihood²⁹ or personal animosity? Were his actions reasonable (for example, in resisting attempts by Haviland to convene meetings of local GPs), given that MOHs had a legal responsibility to intervene when health problems arose, and also an obligation to support and advise RSAs at such times?

What do Bell's actions teach us about the state of medical and epidemiological knowledge in this period *on the ground*, as opposed to in the medical schools and consulting rooms of the big cities?³⁰ How much did he encourage proactive management of the crisis, and discussion about its possible causes, or did he adopt a purely defensive posture in the face of parental and other criticism? To what extent did the town, school or public health authorities addressing Uppingham's problems have a view about the epidemiological questions? Did they debate them with curiosity and passion, or was their approach to problems pragmatic, and undogmatic and intellectually unenquiring?³¹

Dr Bell's key opponent, Dr Alfred Haviland, was an even more passionate and messianic MOH – about as far from the over-promoted former inspectors of

²⁸ Brand, Jeanne L: *Doctors and the State: The British Medical Profession and Government Action in Public Health 1870-1912* (Baltimore, 1965) pp. 146-9.

²⁹ He was operating in a 'medical market'. See Digby: *Evolution* esp. pp. 93-125 and Digby, Anne: *Making a Medical Living: Doctors and Patients in the English Market for Medicine, 1720-1911* (Cambridge, 1994) pp. 107-134. Ch. 3 of this thesis gives further details.

Pelling, Margaret: *Cholera, Fever and English Medicine 1825-1865* (1978) p. 310.

nuisances³² who gained such posts in many rural areas at this time as it was possible to be. A study of Haviland's career and of his involvement in these local events is instructive: did he over-react against the school? How knowledgeable was he about typhoid, or did he use bombast and invective to cover up for his deficiencies both in knowledge and procedure? Or was he simply frustrated by the obstructiveness which he believed he found in so many quarters? In addition, to what extent did his impatience stem from the overwork of covering a huge and unwieldy rural territory, spanning parts of four counties? To what extent did he personify the role of the MOH as interloper and interferer in the private affairs of the rural Establishment, both in absolute terms and in the minds and perceptions of those who crossed him?³³

The effectiveness or otherwise of the LGB is also an issue. It had a poor reputation, for slowness and bureaucracy: did it prove inadequate to the task? The complex relationships between the poor law and medical divisions of the LGB have received too little attention from historians, who have tended to concentrate on its institutional and bureaucratic failings. Elizabeth Hurren's recent work on Northamptonshire³⁴ points to the essential confusion created in the minds of local guardians by an organisation whose two distinct departments and cultures combined to encourage increased spending on sanitary reform while conducting a crusade against rising costs of outdoor relief. Would Uppingham show a similar picture?

³² Hamlin, Christopher: 'Sanitary Policing and the Local State, 1873-1874: A Statistical Study of English and Welsh Towns' *Social History of Medicine* 18 No. 1 (2005) p. 40.

³³ See Wilkinson, Anne: 'The Beginnings of Disease Control in London' (Oxford University D.Phil. thesis, 1980) pp. 23-28.

³⁴ Hurren, Elizabeth T: 'Poor Law' pp. 399-418, and "'The Bury-al Board': Poverty, Politics and Poor Relief in the Brixworth Union, Northamptonshire c1870-1900" (Leicester University Ph.D. thesis, 2000).

The thesis also raises some questions of comparability. How well advanced was sanitation reform in the East Midlands as an area, and (as a town) was Uppingham lagging behind its immediate neighbours in that area? What does its experience tell us about contemporary assumptions about the best organisation to provide water to a local community? Was Uppingham (as a school) any more primitive in its sanitary arrangements than comparable boarding schools at the time, and how prone were those schools to epidemics?

Finally, there are questions about the extent of role of dominant individuals in a local community. To what extent did the personal and professional differences (and rivalries) between Thring and his opponents exacerbate the situation? How much did they polarise people – and to what extent did they make an agreed outcome hard to achieve? Do these events show that *in reality* whatever national politicians might have sought to dictate, people in the localities actually drove policy and its enforcement on the periphery?

Uppingham has an unusually fruitful amount and variety of documentary micro-history through which many of these questions can be explored, thanks to its active network of local historians and the richness of documentary evidence available in the local record offices and libraries, as well as in the school archives. This enables us to look at such events in a distinctly different way from the ‘top down’ perspective of most of the historical writing on this topic.

As a footnote to the wider story, there is the care of typhoid itself. One of the aims of the case study is to examine whether any consensus on the causes of, and treatment

methods for, the disease had been achieved by the 1870s amongst those working in rural areas, following Budd's delineation thirty years earlier of the water-borne path of infection.

4) PUBLIC HEALTH STUDIES IN THE LATER VICTORIAN PERIOD

As Barry Reay has pointed out, in one of the few micro-histories of equivalent length to this thesis:

We know remarkably little about health and mortality in the rural areas of nineteenth-century England. As with so many areas of that century's social history, the focus has been on the towns.... In short, rural health does not rate highly on the agenda of either medical or rural historians, and its limited literature conveys a rather optimistic impression...³⁵

His point is echoed by Alun Howkins, who bemoans the fact that 'social history' has been very much a poor relation of agrarian history, and who believes that rural social history studies are too confined to areas of south-east England.³⁶ Apart from Reay's work in Kent, and Elizabeth Hurren's work on Northamptonshire disease control and poor law relief,³⁷ in which she identifies two RSAs which developed a desire to cut corners and to trim sanitary costs (with disastrous results), most existing work concentrates on larger, urban communities. London has been researched repeatedly,³⁸

³⁵ Reay, Barry: *Microhistories: Demography, Society and Culture in Rural England, 1800-1930* (Cambridge, 1996) p. 72.

³⁶ Howkins, Alun: *Overview* in Collins, EJT, (ed), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales, VII, 1850-1914* (Cambridge, 2000) p. 1510.

³⁷ Hurren, Elizabeth T: 1) 'The Bury-al Board' and 2) 'Poor Law' - see footnote 34.

³⁸ E.g. Hardy, Anne: *The Epidemic Streets: Infectious Disease and the Rise of Preventive Medicine 1856-1900* (Oxford, 1993); Watkins, Dorothy: 'The English Revolution in Social Medicine 1889-1911' (London Ph.D. thesis, 1984); also Wilkinson: *Disease Control*.

along with major cities such as Birmingham and Leeds.³⁹ Some individual research centres around an individual working in an area over a long period,⁴⁰ or around civic rivalries between towns,⁴¹ but even studies of the wider national picture tend to concentrate on towns and cities.⁴² Few, if any, put under the microscope the networks of alliances and rivalries, and the personal and professional jealousies of small towns like Uppingham. As Alan Everitt has written:

The Victorian market town has not generally received much attention from English historians. Perhaps it is often thought of as a sleepy backwater, an anachronism, outside the mainstream of historical development. The impression is in many ways a false one... there were more than 400 of these places, with an average population of perhaps some 10,000 each, and two or three times that number in their rural hinterland... The customs, the activities and the ideas of these places went to shape the minds, for good or ill, of many millions of provincial people...⁴³

Thus events in Uppingham may well be typical in some ways of events elsewhere – and they can be used as a rural template to test a number of assumptions about urban communities. Anyone writing on local government and public health is bound to refer to Christopher Hamlin's ground-breaking article 'Muddling in Bumbledom',⁴⁴ -

³⁹ Hennock, EP: *Fit & Proper Persons* (1973).

⁴⁰ See Cambridge, NA: 'The Life and Times of Dr Alfred Carpenter 1825-1892' (London D.Med. thesis, 2002) for details of the major epidemic in Croydon.

⁴¹ Goschl, K: 'A comparative study of Public Health in Wakefield, Halifax and Doncaster 1865-1914' (Cambridge Ph.D. thesis, 1999).

⁴² E.g. Wohl, Anthony S: *Endangered Lives* (1983).

⁴³ Everitt, Alan: *Perspectives in English Urban History* (1973) p. 235.

⁴⁴ Hamlin, Christopher: 'Muddling in Bumbledom: On the Enormity of Large Sanitary Improvements in Four British towns 1855-1885' *Victorian Studies* 32 (1988) pp. 55-83.

although it deals with urban communities much larger than Uppingham.⁴⁵ Hamlin declares that 'large-scale sanitary reforms were more difficult to bring about than has generally been believed'.⁴⁶ Reasons for this include having to rely on permissive (rather than obligatory) legislation, strict treasury control, a lack of technical expertise and conflicting advice from experts, a fear of making mistakes and then the fear of legal action and writs of sequestration when errors were made. PWJ Bartrip believes that the enforcement mechanisms were inadequate too, thus giving the *British Medical Journal (BMJ)* a campaign to fight for their reinforcement.⁴⁷

Above all, Hamlin suggests that guardians faced the resistance of 'a *shopocracy* of small businessmen, too-self-interested and narrow-minded to see the long-term benefits of sewer systems and water supplies and unwilling to accept (or pay for) the expertise of engineers, chemists, or medical professionals'⁴⁸ - another theme echoed by Bartrip, who cites Tom Taylor's remark as secretary of the Local Government Act Office (LGAO), that local government was 'the rule of unmitigated selfishness and penny wisdom under the specious mask of local liberty'.⁴⁹

RJ Morris suggests that selfishness was not the only cause:

House building was more than a search for profits and rents. House building and mortgage finance were often designed to provide income for old age, for a widow or an unmarried daughter. Thus the defence of the rights of urban

⁴⁵ Barnsley, Birmingham, Merthyr Tydfil and Leamington Spa.

⁴⁶ Hamlin: 'Bumbledom' p. 60.

⁴⁷ Bartrip, PWJ: *Mirror of Medicine: A History of the British Medical Journal* (Oxford, 1990) pp. 52-57.

⁴⁸ Hamlin: 'Bumbledom' p. 57.

⁴⁹ Bartrip: *Mirror of Medicine* pp. 53-54. The *BMJ* was concerned that GPs themselves were sometimes forced to pay for patient improvements which the guardians should have provided.

property against high rates and building and sanitary regulations was not a simple matter of greed, but was a defence of a careful plan of life-cycle related saving...⁵⁰

He identifies the dominant role of lawyers in making the arrangements for this saving strategy, thus giving them intimate knowledge of the (perhaps precarious) financial situation of their clients.

Hamlin's view also has echoes in Anthony Wohl's assertion in *Endangered Lives*:

The franchise and property qualifications required to sit on some town councils led in some places to 'tight little oligarchies' and in most places to local boards or councils in which property interests (with income derived from rents) predominated.⁵¹

Ruth Hodgkinson cites similar concerns about local guardians. It was generally thought at the time that the Poor Law medical services were better administered in the provinces than in London (because boards of guardians contained large numbers of clergymen and magistrates who were personally acquainted with the wants of local people, enabling them to exercise a 'wise discrimination' in matters of relief)⁵² - but an article in the *Lancet* in 1869 showed that this was 'a complete illusion'.⁵³

⁵⁰ Morris RJ: 'The Middle Class and British Towns and Cities of the Industrial Revolution 1780 to 1870', in Fraser, D and Sutcliffe, A: *The Pursuit of Urban History* (1983) p. 295. See also Morris, RJ: 'The Middle Class and the Property Cycle during the Industrial Revolution' in Smout, TC: *The Search for Wealth and Stability: Essays in Economic and Social History presented to M.W. Flinn* (London 1979) p. 110, and Morris, RJ: 'The Friars and Paradise: An Essay in the Building History of Oxford 1801-1861' *Oxoniensia* 36 (1971) p. 95.

⁵¹ Wohl: *Endangered Lives* p. 167.

⁵² Hodgkinson, Ruth G: *The Origins of the National Health Service* (1967) p. 288.

⁵³ Ibid, quoting *Lancet* 6 March 1869 p. 336. The article concerned two complaints against a relieving

Overall, however, the obstacles to reform were formidable - justifying EP Hennock's assertion that the local rating system 'could not but act as a check to any imaginative approach to the problems of urban life'.⁵⁴ Hennock also believes that 'the effect [of local rates being assessed solely on the rental value of property] was to push middle-class landlords into local government to protect their interests, by ensuring that rates were kept as low as possible',⁵⁵ and that it was not enough to have 'good intentions or even sound plans. Only a council which devised means wherewith to ward off a ratepayers' reaction would survive to carry out effective improvements over a long period'. He describes three ways of warding off a crisis: careful financial administration, political skill and imagination and the possession of a substantial revenue independent of the rates.⁵⁶ It was unlikely that a community as small as Uppingham would have these skills in abundance.

Uppingham also enables us to test two other ideas. Anne Digby and FML Thompson emphasise the power and influence of landowners: they maintain that farmers were dominant in boards of guardians⁵⁷ and that some Victorian landowners were 'narrowly self-centred in their interpretation of what was required to protect their interests', with 'an indifference to the wider issues of the social order of the countryside'.⁵⁸ Gordon Mingay turns the spotlight on to a different class network, believing that 'medicine, veterinary science, land agency and the auctioning of

officer and the guardians in Guildford, following the withdrawal of food from two people on outdoor relief.

⁵⁴ Hennock, EP: 'Finance and Politics in Urban Local Government' *Historical Journal* VI, 2 (1963) p. 216.

⁵⁵ Ibid p. 216; Wohl: *Endangered Lives* p. 171.

⁵⁶ Hennock: 'Finance and Politics' pp. 217-218.

⁵⁷ Digby, Anne: 'The Local State', in Collins, EJT: (ed), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales, VII, 1850-1914* (Cambridge, 2000) p. 1428.

⁵⁸ FML Thompson: 'Landowners and the rural community' in Mingay GE: *The Victorian Countryside* (1981) Vol. 2 pp. 458-459.

property, as well as commercial services like banking and insurance all created in the country and market towns of rural England a powerful middle-class elite'.⁵⁹ Howkins further argues:

The nineteenth century market town created the ethos of a French pays, a social and community focus which had a clear meaning for its inhabitants of 'my area', as cottage industries gave way to factory production and the growth of shopping centres...⁶⁰

He also believes that the countryside's rigid social structure was supported further by an almost total separation of the lieutenant class from the rest...⁶¹

The *pays* notion of tight-knit, inward-looking, small-town communities has an interesting addition dimension when one considers the specific context of boarding schools within such towns. TW Bamford has asserted that the growth of such schools after 1851 led to big cash and employment benefits for their local communities, but that from the 1870s with the growth of the railways and of a more sophisticated retail network:

The schools began to rely less on local tradesmen and more on cut-price stores in the big cities... [yet] in some cases, like Oundle and Uppingham, the situation is practically the same today. School depressions were town depressions – times of unrelieved gloom, with unemployment, empty houses,

⁵⁹ Mingay, GE: *Rural Life in Victorian England* (1977) p. 167.

⁶⁰ Howkins, Alun: 'Types of Rural Community' in Collins: *Agrarian History* p. 1336. See also Thompson, FML: 'An Anatomy of English Agriculture, 1870-1914' in Holderness, BA and Turner, M: *Land, Labour and Agriculture, 1700-1920* (1991) pp. 216-217.

⁶¹ Howkins: 'Overview', in Collins: *Agrarian History* p. 1501.

and lounges deserted in hotels...⁶²

Bamford also points to an interesting example of how the market/school town *shopocracy* might be driven to overcome the low-spending instincts described by Hamlin, if its collective livelihood were threatened by a school's hostility towards it, by a school's declining reputation or (as in Uppingham School's extreme case) a sudden misfortune threatening its very existence:

The traders were the most vitally concerned of all local groups, and were naturally sensitive... to anything that threatened their welfare and profits. A shop out of bounds, alterations in the boarding-house tradition, the establishment of an internal tuck-shop, bulk-buying – all these were resisted by aggrieved individuals, but never by joint action, for that smacked too much of trade-unionism, and those who were still dependent on school trade, or hopeful of it, feared reprisal and ruin. The same fear kept the traders quiet, not only over wholesale and retail matters, but over the wider questions of health and education... Indeed, the silence of the traders at times of crisis made up a neutral block in town affairs concerning the school, which effectively split the most worthy causes.”⁶³

In Uppingham these traders had already faced issues of education, as their local grammar school became less accessible to them, and in 1876-7 they would face both

⁶² Bamford: *Rise of the Public Schools* p. 192-3. See also his study of the town and school situated in Rugby: 'Public School Town in the Nineteenth Century', *British Journal of Education Studies* (1957) pp. 25-36.

⁶³ *Ibid* p. 194.

health issues (and what to spend on them) and the prospect of the loss, temporarily or permanently, of the school on which their livelihood depended.

The Uppingham guardians could not easily draw on expert advice on the extreme complexities of the nineteenth century rating system. However, Wright and Hobhouse suggest that there may indeed have been a justification in the RSA's preoccupation with achieving urban sanitary authority (USA) status than has previously been recognised; this status might indeed have made it easier for the guardians to increase their powers of street cleansing and improvement, and to raise additional rate revenue.⁶⁴

Literature on the history of water supply centres on the work of Christopher Hamlin and John Hassan. Hamlin suggests that 'what is remarkable about the state of water analysis in Britain at the end of the nineteenth century was the appeal to embody symbolic authority in persons rather than in processes'. Would this be what transpired in Uppingham (where Bryan Matthews did some valuable research on water supply questions in the mid 1970s)? And would events there support Hassan's statement that it was only in the 1880s (i.e. a few years *after* typhoid struck Uppingham) that 'the water question moved from the domain of chemistry into that of biology',⁶⁵ or Hamlin's belief that chemical analysis in water treatment was 'an empty orthodoxy'?⁶⁶ The way in which water supply was seen as an essentially municipal activity at the start and end of the nineteenth century, while there was a trend towards

⁶⁴ Wright, RS and Hobhouse, Henry: *An Outline of Local Government and Taxation* (1884) pp. 28-31.

⁶⁵ Hassan, John: *A History of Water in Modern England and Wales* (1998) p. 48.

⁶⁶ Hamlin, Christopher: *A Science of Impurity* (1990) p. 205.

private operators in between,⁶⁷ suggests that the Uppingham RSA was not alone in debating and disputing which type of supplier would be the more effective.

5) COMPOSITION OF THE CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 builds up a picture of both town and school in 1875. It describes the main social characteristics of the town, and the state of its sanitation and water supply in 1875. It analyses the economic interaction between school personnel and townspeople. It then examines the development of the school physically and financially under Thring over the previous two decades, from a small country grammar school into a 300-pupil boarding school with boys drawn from all over the country. He and his staff had personally financed the growth of the school, and they stood to lose nearly everything if it were to close. His educational philosophy and other school issues are explored in more detail in Appendix 2.

Chapter 2 provides the political and economic context against which the events of 1875-7 need to be assessed. The RSA did not have complete freedom of action to make improvements; in particular it had to justify itself to a rural population which was naturally resistant to rate increases. This resistance was exacerbated by the agricultural depression which began in the early 1870s. In this context it analyses the membership of two key groups of men of landed interests: the trustees (governors) of the school, and the Uppingham union of guardians. It outlines the rating system in force at the time and the demands placed on rural local government by the great Public Health Acts of 1872 and 1875. Finally it examines the demands on, and internal tensions within, the LGB.

⁶⁷ See Robins, FW: *The Story of Water Supply* (1946) pp. 194-5.

Chapter 3 begins with a brief history of sanitation and water supply in nineteenth century rural England. It examines Uppingham's previous rate of improvements compared with its larger neighbours, Oakham and Stamford. It explains the training of, and pressures on, country GPs at the time, and the recent evolution of the post of MOH. It then focuses on the personalities and professional backgrounds of the two principal medical figures in this controversy, Dr Bell and Dr Haviland. They had different professional priorities and loyalties too, and they quickly developed a deep mutual antipathy. Appendix 4 explains briefly the medical developments concerning typhoid during this period, and the extent to which nineteenth century boarding schools were prone to epidemic illnesses of many types.

Chapter 4 begins with the measures taken by the RSA in the years before a brief outbreak of disease in the school in June 1875, and the school's growing concern that they were inadequate. It describes the main typhoid outbreak with over 40 cases and several deaths in the autumn of 1875, and the actions taken by both the town and the school. It focuses on the emergent hostility between Thring and the RSA, and Bell and Haviland, as parental panic began to develop and the school term had to be prematurely ended. It shows how the RSA initially commissioned a sanitary engineer with a national reputation, Rogers Field, to investigate the cause of the outbreak, but then (in an attempt to avoid charges of having been too inactive in response to earlier danger signals) sought to pre-empt the findings of Field and other expert investigators by rushing to place the blame firmly on the school.

Chapter 5 shows how Thring used his contacts with men of influence to force the Local Government Board into the dispute. The LGB entered the controversy only with reluctance. There is an account of the increasing interest of both the national and medical press in support of each side. It analyses the reports on various aspects of the epidemic (four in total, commissioned by each side), all of which appeared around Christmas and New Year 1875/6. The vehemence (and partisanship) of Haviland's report in particular was a major factor in ensuring that the two parties came to no swift agreement.

Chapter 6 describes the return of the school for the new term in January 1876, and the reappearance of typhoid within a month. This led to a new bout of recrimination between the various parties locally, and more approaches to the LGB. In desperation Thring and the housemasters began to consider the possibility of removing the school altogether from Uppingham for a time. Thring then had to face opposition from most of the school trustees to his proposal. There is an analysis of the risks which this entailed, showing why it is likely that the RSA doubted whether he would go through with the idea. The challenges which Thring and his staff faced at Borth are summarised in appendix 5.

Chapter 7 focuses on Uppingham in the months after the School had left, up to August 1876. This is a particularly complex period, not previously researched other than through Thring's diaries. The diaries place all the blame for delayed improvements to sanitation and water supply firmly on the shoulders of the guardians, but examination of both Dr Bell's *Letterbook* and the LGB papers show that while the RSA was undoubtedly both obstructive and small-minded at times, it now found itself in a very

difficult position, caught between the demands of the school that it spend money fast, and the ratepayers that it avoid being too extravagant. Events descended into near-farce with the attempts by the RSA to deny votes in the local election to the absent schoolmasters. This chapter also looks at the financial worries which Thring increasingly faced, as well as the pressure being brought to bear on him by the trustees to return. Finally it explains how the school used all its powerful contacts in August 1876 to force the issue of improvement, coincident with a revolt against the RSA by the shopkeepers, who had now decided that getting the school back to stimulate the local economy was a more important consideration than resisting rate increases.

Chapter 8 deals with events through the autumn and winter of 1876 and the spring of 1877. A combination of the sanitary and water supply work taking longer than anticipated, together with periodic new outbreaks of typhoid in the town, prevented the school's return even in January 1876. Meanwhile there were new disputes between all the parties over issues such as the state of the town's national school and the workhouse.

The death, from typhoid, of leading guardian Barnard Smith in late December 1876 did much to convince all parties that nothing must now obstruct further progress. Finally this chapter describes the school's triumphant return in April 1877, and the financial aftermath for the town – comparing its finances during 1874-83 with four neighbouring RSAs. The financial consequences for Thring, the school and the town, and other aspects of the aftermath, are all recorded at the end of this chapter, and in appendices 6 and 7.

6) SOURCES AND THEIR INTERPRETATION

All the original documents listed as being in the Uppingham (school) archive are indexed and housed in filing cabinets. Because most of this work has been carried out fifty miles from Uppingham, they have been photocopied; the photocopies will be filed chronologically, and will be housed in the archives.

a) Thring and the school

The school archive is very extensive, and Thring is well-documented.⁶⁸ He has long been seen as a visionary figure – but an autocrat. Several of his staff wrote books about him after his death some of which border on hagiography. He was also a skilled self-publicist. The archive contains many of his letters, and two years of his diaries, together with the selection of entries for other years published after his death by Sir George Parkin,⁶⁹ a friend who was commissioned to produce a two-volume selection of extracts of diary entries and letters by Thring's family, who also ordered that the full diaries be destroyed. This selection needs to be treated with some critical care.

Thring wrote the diaries to leave a record for his children, but they also served as a means for him to dissipate his nervous energy and frustration with people and circumstances which he thought were obstructing him in realizing his vision. They were also something of a safety valve, as he tried to keep recurring money worries from his wife and children, preferring to confide them to the pages which he wrote up each night throughout his life. Perhaps it was inevitable that Parkin's selection dwells

⁶⁸ See Matthews: *By God's Grace* chs. 5 and 6; also Rigby, Cormac: 'The Life and Influence of Edward Thring' (Oxford D.Phil. thesis, 1968), or the much longer unpublished manuscript which he deposited with the school's archivist in 2003.

⁶⁹ Parkin: *Thring*.

more on the struggles than the successes. The cumulative effect was to present a picture of someone depressed and anxious, sometimes bitter and petulant – rather than someone who simply needed to give vent to his emotions at the end of a long day. Parkin's selection does, however, provide a graphic illustration of the battles he had to fight over a long period, and the frustration he felt about those who opposed him.

b) The town and its RSA

The publications of the Uppingham Local History Studies Group (ULHSG) relating to the town in 1802 and 1851⁷⁰ confirm its essential continuity of personnel, and (along with the 1871 census and local trade directories) provide much of the detail about its local networks. The Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (ROLLR) holds the minute books of the Uppingham Union⁷¹ and the national school,⁷² as well as suit rolls and other documents, but not the minute book of the sanitary sub-committee. This appears to have been lost – either through flooding many years ago in the parish church, or through the later transfer of documents (first to Oakham, and thence to Leicester) as a result of periodic local government re-organisation affecting Rutland.⁷³

The work of Auriol Thompson and Philip Pattenden on the chairman of the Uppingham guardians, Revd Barnard Smith, has added an important personal dimension to the administrative material.⁷⁴ A number of technical drawings compiled

⁷⁰ ULHSG: a) *Uppingham in 1802*; b) *Uppingham in 1851*.

⁷¹ ROLLR DE1381/441: Uppingham Union Minute Book.

⁷² ROLLR DE1784/54: Uppingham National School Minute Book.

⁷³ Based on a conversation in 1976 with a former churchwarden, the late WF Shaw.

⁷⁴ Pattenden, Philip, and Thomson, Auriol: 'The Snuffing of Sanitary Smith: Fellow and Senior Bursar', *Peterhouse Annual Record* 2002-3 (Cambridge, 2005) pp. 43-55. See also Thomson, Auriol: 'A Study of Roles and Relationships in a Rutland Village in the Mid Victorian Period: Glaston c1860-90' (Leicester University MA thesis in English Local History. 1999).

during the period of the sewer system and sewage farm construction (some made by Rogers Field) have recently been lodged with the Rutland museum in Oakham.

c) The Local Government Board

The three boxes of National Archives (PRO/TNA) papers relating to Uppingham⁷⁵ which cover this brief period are an essential antidote to Thring's diaries, because they give us evidence of the dilemmas facing both the guardians and the LGB. In the year from October 1875 alone there were more than 150 papers or references to business between the LGB and either school or town, of which nearly 40 occurred in the final three months of 1875. They cover a huge range of minutiae – from vaccination records to audit matters and the remuneration of the schoolmaster at the workhouse, as well as recording in detail the bitter exchanges over the epidemic. Several other boxes have helped to establish the context in which both the LGB and the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) operated.⁷⁶

d) The Doctors

Dr Bell's *Letterbook* (held in the school archives) gives a spicy flavour of the local rivalries between himself and the other local doctors, and of his strong resentment of Dr Haviland, and of the leading figures in the Uppingham union. It is the essential source for understanding the details of the complex, if short-lived, stand-off between school and town in the summer of 1876.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ PRO/TNA MH12/9815-7: May 1873 to the end of 1875, January 1876-January 1877 and 1877-82.

⁷⁶ TNA MH19/87-88: Local Government reports/general papers 1875-7.

TNA MH25/26-27-28: Correspondence and papers of the Local Government Board 1875-7.

TNA MH19/190: Public Works Loan Board papers 1835-92.

TNA MH30/209: Uppingham Poor Law correspondence.

⁷⁷ See ch. 7.

Haviland was a prolific writer, and two important reports – on the combined districts which he oversaw (1874)⁷⁸ and on Uppingham itself (1875)⁷⁹ - yield much evidence about his uncompromising character. Both the *Lancet* and the *BMJ* provide details of appointment and salaries of MOHs in other parts of the country in this period.⁸⁰ They and other sources suggest that he was hardly typical of rural MOHs, in intelligence and medical training, even if counterparts elsewhere may have shared his zeal and strength of purpose. He had a large, but territorially illogical, geographical area spanning parts of four counties to oversee (explained in chapter 3, section 6).

It has long been known that Haviland was highly critical of the school in his report, which raised issues well beyond those connected with typhoid and which was couched in inflammatory terms. What has hitherto been less evident is that he courted controversy in many of his other writings, and that there is more than a suspicion that he selected facts to fit pre-ordained conclusions – a view which at least one reviewer or his work at the time shares with a modern writer.⁸¹ On the other hand, many of his recommendations would later be taken up as best practice for school doctors across the country.⁸²

⁷⁸ Haviland, Alfred: *Report on the Geographical Distribution of fever within the Area of the Combined Sanitary Authorities in the Counties of Northampton, Leicester, Rutland and Bucks* 11 July 1874.

⁷⁹ Haviland, Alfred: *Report on the Late Outbreak of Enteric Fever in Archdeacon Johnson's School, Uppingham, Rutland: June-November 1875*.

⁸⁰ See ch. 3 section 5.

⁸¹ See ch. 3 section 6 for details of this debate. See also Anonymous: 'A Review of Geographical Distribution of Heart Disease, Cancer and Phthisis by Alfred Haviland' *Athenaeum* 4 March 1876; Freeman, TW: 'Nineteenth Century Medical Geographer', *Geographical Magazine* X (1978) p. 90; Barrett, Frank A: 'Alfred Haviland's Nineteenth Century Map Analysis of the Geographical Distribution of Disease in England and Wales' *Social Science and Medicine* 46 No. 6 (1998) pp. 767-781, and *Disease and Geography: The History of an Idea* (Toronto, 2000) pp. 323-325.

⁸² See ch. 8 p. 311, and also appendix 4.

CHAPTER 1 – TOWN AND SCHOOL: 1875

This chapter describes the salient features of the town, its rudimentary arrangements both in sanitary matters and water supply, and its social and economic interaction with the school which existed within it. It explains the distinctive nature of what the school's headmaster, Edward Thring, had built up over previous two decades, and the personal resources that he and his housemasters had committed to their venture. It establishes why the school would fight so hard if it found itself under threat (a theme developed further in appendix 2).

1) UPPINGHAM TOWN

Uppingham, *the village of the people on the hill*,¹ was a small and close-knit community in 1875 - similar in size to many others scattered up and down the length of rural England. Rutland was England's smallest county, only about 15 miles by 15 (95,000 acres in all),² bordered by the much larger counties of Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire and Northamptonshire. The county's entire population in the 1871 census was barely 20,000, and Uppingham was its second largest town after Oakham.³

The town population had grown markedly during the first half of the century, although the increase had slowed to a halt since.⁴ Nearly 1,400 at the time of the 1801 census, thereafter it grew steadily, reaching 2,065 in 1851 (of whom just over half had been born there),⁵ and 2,176 in 1861. The 1871 figures list 2,601 persons,⁶ and by

¹ Bourne, Jill: *Understanding Leicestershire and Rutland Place Names* (Loughborough, 2003) p. 112.

² Page, William, (ed): *The Victoria County History of Rutland* (1935) Vol. 2 p. 247.

³ 1871 census: RG 10/3301-2.

⁴ Based on census returns – but see also Field, Rogers: *Report to the Sanitary Authority* 6 Jan 1876. On p. 2 of that report he suggests slightly lower figures.

⁵ Uppingham Local History Studies Group: *Uppingham in 1851: A Night in the Life of a Thriving Town*

1875 the total figure is believed to have risen by about another 300 - a significant peak which would be followed by a gradual decline during the coming agricultural depression.⁷ There were just under 450 inhabited dwellings.

The county boasted about 300 miles of turnpike and highway, and a small network of railway lines, but the railway had not yet reached Uppingham. Omnibuses departed six times a day - three from the Falcon Hotel in the market square for Manton station (3½ miles away), and three from the White Hart in the High Street for trains at Seaton (3 miles). A network of 45 local carriers provided goods and passenger links between Uppingham, its neighbouring villages, Oakham (6 miles) and Stamford (11 miles), mostly in mid-week. The daily papers did not arrive until lunchtime. Letters arrived from, and were sent off to, London and all parts of the country twice a day and once on Sundays (from the post office in High Street West)⁸. There were postal deliveries both morning and afternoon on weekdays, and a single one on Sunday.⁹

The parish contained 1,463 acres of land, most of which was enclosed under an Act of Parliament of 1770, subsequently extended.¹⁰ Situated on a prominent ridge, the town lies significantly higher than much of the land immediately around it, which is why its inhabitants are inclined to say that the wind blows straight across from the Urals. Beyond it lay many miles of good agricultural and hunting land. It had grown up around the crossroads of Nottingham and Northampton, about 35 miles to the north and south respectively, with Leicester (an emergent city of 60,000 people, specialising

(Uppingham, 2001) p. 7.

⁶ The 1861 figure which does not include the 360 or so school pupils on holiday at the time when the census was taken. By contrast, the 1871 figure (taken in term-time) included the school personnel.

⁷ Matthews, Bryan: *The Book of Rutland* (1978) p. 100.

⁸ UHLSG: *Uppingham in 1851* p. 42.

⁹ Traylen, T: *Turnpikes and Royal Mail of Rutland* (Stamford, 1982) p. 171.

¹⁰ Page: *Victoria County History* Vol. 2 (1935) pp. 95-103.

in shoe manufacture) and Peterborough 20 miles to the west and east respectively. London was just over 100 miles to the south.

The town itself covered about 50 acres by 1875, and consisted of one long main street (the High Street) running east-west, with the narrower North Street and South Lane running parallel on either side. These streets were joined by short lanes running at right angles to them, parallel with the Oakham to Kettering road running from north to south.

There had been a settlement in Uppingham from the sixth or seventh century (almost certainly as one of the components of Ridlington manor), although it is not mentioned in the Domesday Book.¹¹ Most of its buildings dated from the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries when Uppingham (like Stamford) became a trading town of some fashion. Its street plan in 1875 had changed little in the previous two hundred years.¹² Arthur Mee's *Leicestershire and Rutland* describes it as 'A pleasant little town with green fields everywhere, it has a few earthworks remaining from an ancient forest on a hill which gives us views of Beaumont Chase and the blue hills of Leicestershire.'¹³ Another writer records that 'all around are green fields and hills... dotted about are picturesque little villages in golden and brown stone'.¹⁴

Sandstone quarries nearby were mostly used for the building, although those workings which had once been close to the western edge of the town had now given way to

¹¹ Rogers, Alan; *The Making of Uppingham as Illustrated in its Topography and Buildings*: (ULHSG publication 2003) p. 1.

¹² Hopewell, Jeffrey: *Shire County Guide to Leicestershire and Rutland* (Princes Risborough, 1984) p. 63.

¹³ Mee, Arthur: *Leicestershire and Rutland* (Rotherham, 1997) p. 279.

¹⁴ Newman, Bernard: *Portrait of the Shires* (1968) p. 143.

housing.¹⁵ Local trade directories show that the area was overwhelmingly agricultural,¹⁶ and that most of its population drew their income from working on the land.¹⁷ The 1871 census, both in Uppingham and in its surrounding villages, reinforces this impression; it shows a very large number of agricultural labourers, gardeners and farm-related trades – saddlers and blacksmiths, shepherds and crop-makers.

The market had been in existence since 1281.¹⁸ Bear and bull-baiting¹⁹ occurred in the market place just north of the church, with carts drawn up around it to make a suitable enclosure, until such events were outlawed early in the nineteenth century.²⁰ In the 1870s a market was held every Wednesday, and cattle fairs in March and July.²¹ During these fairs, pens of sheep occupied much of the High Street; householders had to step through the pens to get on to the street, and the smells from the animals could be pungent. Horses, cows and pigs were kept in groups all through the town. Sometimes they escaped; a cow had once thrust its head through the window of one of the school classrooms in an attempt to join in,²² and another had chased a boy through part of the school, cornering and injuring him. On market day, farmers' wives rode pillion behind their husbands with baskets of produce on each arm; there was music,

¹⁵ USM 1911. There had once been quarries along Stockerston Road.

¹⁶ Slater's *Directory of Leicestershire and Rutland* 1850, Harrod's *Directory of Leicestershire and Rutland* 1870, Barker's *Leicestershire and Rutland Directory* 1875, Kelly's *Directory of Leicestershire and Rutland* 1876, and CN Wright's *Commercial and General Directory of Leicestershire and Rutland* 1880.

¹⁷ According to the 1801 census, 94 of the 1393 residents of Uppingham were directly and mainly engaged in farming – including graziers and smallholders, millers and maltsters. ULHSG: *Uppingham in 1802: A Year to Remember?* (Uppingham, 2002) pp. 5-7.

¹⁸ Hopewell: *Shire County Guide* p. 63.

¹⁹ Traylen, Tony, (comp.): *Uppingham in Rutland* (Stamford, 1982) p. 3.

²⁰ Palmer, Roy: *Folklore of Leicestershire and Rutland* (Wymondham, 2002) p. 127.

²¹ Kelly's *Directory* 1876.

²² USM 1913: the writer was a housemaster, Howard Candler.

singing and dancing and the revellers bought hot pies and gingerbread from local street sellers.²³

Horse racing had once taken place on an oval course on the ridge a mile to the South of the town.²⁴ For much of the nineteenth century there was a feast for itinerant tradesmen, held in July just after St Peter's day (on June 29th) – one of nearly fifty in Leicestershire and Rutland.²⁵ In the 1820s this had included ass racing and the ascent of fire balloons.²⁶ Guy Fawkes celebrations were still held; they tended to be especially boisterous and sometimes got out of hand. In 1841 some local boys had been prosecuted after they let off fireworks in the street and the local constable intervened; a mob surrounded his house and smashed the windows, tearing off part of the roof. He fired on them, and several were injured. The event was stopped for a while, but it had returned to the market place by the early 1850s – complete with cartloads of effigies of well-known figures to be burned.²⁷

Rutland has a strong continuity of names and families from the past – amongst them some still very familiar to those who now live there - Baines²⁸ and Cliff(e), Dorman and Ellingworth, Thorpe and Tyers. Just over half (77/143) of the family names listed in the 1876 Directory under members of businesses, trades and professions also appeared in 1850.²⁹ This is hardly surprising in view of the evidence of the 1851 census: of the 2,065 persons listed there, just over 50% were shown as having been born in the town. Moreover, of the remaining 938, half came from villages within

²³ Palmer: *Folklore* p. 164.

²⁴ Ibid p. 133.

²⁵ Ibid p. 154.

²⁶ ULHSG: *Uppingham in 1802* p. 1.

²⁷ Palmer: *Folklore* p. 267.

²⁸ ULHSG: *Uppingham in 1802* p. 65. Baines' sweetshop had been in existence for well over a century.

²⁹ Kelly's *Directory*: Slater's *Directory*.

twelve miles.³⁰ Out of 151 married men who had been born in the town, over 60% had chosen an Uppingham woman as their bride.³¹

The parish church had been built in the centre of this settlement during the fourteenth century.³² Just south-east of the crossroads, it faced the Falcon hotel. Largely renovated and repaired in 1860 at a cost of £4,000,³³ its spire had more recently been restored; it dominated the skyline. Services were held at least twice each Sunday. Closely linked to the parish church was the national school (founded in 1818),³⁴ which could cater for 360 children. The church's personnel was well-established; the rector (William Wales) had been in post since 1858,³⁵ and of the two churchwardens, William Compton (wine merchant)³⁶ had held office since 1857 and John Mould (farmer and grazier) since 1859. There was an established network of sidesmen too, including Henry Kirby (grocer),³⁷ George Foster (farmer) and Thomas Bell (doctor).³⁸

The directories list over 200 enterprises and small businesses, including nearly 30 builders, joiners, carpenters and plumbers. Of these small businesses, 28 can be classed as domestic and household services (including clock repairers and chimney sweeps). Another 35 derived their income from farming and agriculture; there were a dozen innkeepers or individuals otherwise linked to the licensed trade – and nearly 60 shopkeepers. The shops included seven butchers and five bakeries. There were also seven grocers, a greengrocer, florist, a photographic artist, and no fewer than fifteen

³⁰ ULHSG: *Uppingham in 1851* p. 7.

³¹ *Ibid* p. 8.

³² There is evidence of a Norman church before the C14th: information from Peter Lane.

³³ Harrod's *Directory* – although the statement of expenses incurred (ROLLR DE 5430) suggests that it was nearer £6,000.

³⁴ ULHSG: *Uppingham in 1802* p. 41.

³⁵ NRO: Longden, Revd HI: *Northampton and Rutland Clergy from 1850* (Northampton, 1941)

³⁶ See chs. 4 and 7 for Compton's decisive interventions in the events to come.

³⁷ Graham, JP: *Forty Years of Uppingham* (1932) pp. 75-76.

³⁸ ULHSG: *Canon Aldred's Historical Notes* (Uppingham, 1999).

dressmakers, tailors and milliners – along with three doctors and surgeons and one vet. It is significant for later events that many of the shopkeepers were members not of the parish church but of one of the dissenting chapels³⁹ - Wesleyan, Independent (congregational) and Baptist – or the temperance hall in South Street.⁴⁰

The local newspaper, the *Stamford Mercury*, had been printed each Friday for more than a century. It had once been strongly Tory,⁴¹ but was briefly in this period of a Liberal persuasion.⁴² Its news and advertisements (no doubt read to poorer inhabitants in local alehouses)⁴³ give the impression of a community with a settled life. As 1875 began, Mr Tailby's hounds met in nearby Allexton at New Year, and the inhabitants of the Uppingham workhouse had just enjoyed their annual Christmas treat.⁴⁴ The Wesleyans had a public tea on Good Friday. At Easter there was a visit from a temperance lecturer, as well as a full choral service at the parish church (which launched a campaign for voluntary subscriptions for repairs to its clock).⁴⁵ Concerts there were frequent, with performers coming from all over England.⁴⁶ The Falcon hotel (often used for dances) was about to undergo extensive alterations and the Uppingham amateur minstrels were shortly to give an entertainment in the lecture hall.⁴⁷ This had been founded in 1861 to arrange lectures for town and school alike, and next to it had recently been added a classroom, and a reading room which

³⁹ ULHSG: *Uppingham in 1851* pp. 46-48. Some however, (e.g. Compton), were supporters of both church and chapel.

⁴⁰ ULHSG: *Uppingham in 1802* p. 18. Methodism arrived in 1817; the dissenting community grew steadily through the century, in the years before Wales' arrival.

⁴¹ Ibid p 2.

⁴² Newton, David, and Smith, Martin: *The Stamford Mercury: Three Centuries of Newspaper Publishing* (Stamford, 1999) p. 178. It reverted to Toryism again in the late 1880s under a new editor.

⁴³ ULHSG: *Uppingham in 1802* p. 3.

⁴⁴ *Mercury* 1 January 1875.

⁴⁵ Ibid 26 March 1875.

⁴⁶ ULHSG: *Uppingham in 1802* p. 62.

⁴⁷ *Mercury* 23 April 1875.

contained a subscription library of 1,000 books for 300 subscribers paying 1/6d per year.

Theatre performances had long been held in a barn in the Hall grounds just off Adderley Street.⁴⁸ The town boasted a football club and two cricket clubs,⁴⁹ and a mutual improvement society. The rector (Revd William Wales) was the society's president; and the vice-president was John Hawthorn, who was also sub-distributor for the stamp office. He was a godly man, who ran the main bookshop and a printing business, as well as two book distribution outlets, one of which was 'the Christian Knowledge and Bible Society Depot'. JC Guy (manager of the Uppingham branch of the Stamford and Spalding bank, one of three banks in the town) was its secretary, and the treasurer was Charles White (an ironmonger on High Street East).⁵⁰

Local government officials in the town included a registrar of births, marriages and deaths, and an Inland Revenue officer (based at the Falcon hotel). For those who fell foul of the law there was a county court held every two months at the Falcon, with jurisdiction over surrounding villages. Four local magistrates took turns to sit – on the first Friday in each month.⁵¹

The two law firms were involved in a substantial range of activities beyond purely legal work. First and foremost they were stewards for the two local manors. The family practice of William, William Thomas and Robert Sheild (with John Pateman in partnership) acted for the manor of Preston and Uppingham, held by the Noel family.

⁴⁸ ULHSG: *Uppingham in 1802* p. 62.

⁴⁹ *Wright's Directory*.

⁵⁰ *Harrod's Directory*.

⁵¹ *Kelly's Directory*. Many of the magistrates were also trustees of the school.

William Sheild had worked in the town for three decades but lived in Wing, where he had inherited property.⁵² He was clerk to the magistrates and to the county courts, and not only a guardian but also solicitor and superintendent registrar of the Uppingham union. He and his partners held a string of local posts as variously clerk to the justices, commissioner, registrar, bailiff, coroner, treasurer, and turnpike trustee. William Thomas Sheild and John Pateman were between them agents for no fewer than five insurance companies.

William Henry Brown acted for the Rectory manor. He came from a long-standing Uppingham family, and was the third generation of his firm to work in the town.⁵³ He was clerk to the guardians and the RSA, as well as clerk to the workhouse and commissioner to the supreme court of judicature.

Both law firms lent money and carried out extensive property transactions, which also involved arranging mortgages for clients, many of whom ran shops and small businesses.⁵⁴ Both William Sheild and WH Brown were also board members of the Uppingham Gas Company.⁵⁵ They were men with knowledge of their clients' affairs, local influence and considerable local patronage – as was bank manager Guy, who was agent to a further four insurance providers.

There was a fire station on the Glaston Road and a police station on Stockerston Road (2 officers and 2 cells). After an initial proposal to install gas lighting in 1831

⁵² ULHSG: *Uppingham in 1851* p. 26. He had changed his family name from Gilson to Sheild, in order to inherit this property.

⁵³ His brother, Frederick, was one of the town doctors – see ch. 3 section 4.

⁵⁴ See ch. 2 section 5.

⁵⁵ Kelly's *Directory*.

(rejected as requiring too heavy a burden on the rates),⁵⁶ concerns about safety and security led to a second, successful scheme in 1839,⁵⁷ when a gas works had been built on Stockerston Road.⁵⁸ The system was further improved by new street lights with ‘handsome cast-iron pillars’ in 1860,⁵⁹ but supplies in both houses and streets were not always reliable.⁶⁰ Gas was used mainly for lighting until well into the twentieth century – although the cost and effectiveness of this and other services had been the subject of dispute between the vestry, town members and the rector over many years.⁶¹ However there would be no electricity for many years yet.⁶²

Between one-third and one-half of the population of England and Wales lived in, or were dependent on, provincial market towns in 1851.⁶³ Rutland itself would change comparatively little over the next half-century in this respect.⁶⁴ Uppingham was typical of much of rural England: stability and continuity were evident everywhere within it.

2) SANITATION AND WATER SUPPLY

The High Street had been bordered on both sides by open channels of water until the 1840s⁶⁵ – streams which turned ashy on Mondays (thanks to blue-bag and soap as people did their washing in cauldrons or coppers supported by bricks over wood fires,

⁵⁶ Traylen, T: *Uppingham in Rutland* (1982) p. 17.

⁵⁷ ULHSG: *Uppingham in 1802* p. 53.

⁵⁸ Wright’s *Directory* makes reference to the Gas Company, which had as its directors Messrs Hodgkinson, Hart, Compton, Shield and Pateman. It moved to Gas Hill in 1867.

⁵⁹ ULHSG: *Uppingham in 1851* p. 37. See also Traylen: *Uppingham* p. 20.

⁶⁰ USM 1885.

⁶¹ ULHSG: *Uppingham in 1851* p. 27.

⁶² Electricity appears in *Matkins Almanack* for 1924: ‘Oakham Gas and Electricity Co’. It was 1932 before Canon Aldred persuaded his PCC to equip the parish church. See ULHSG: *Canon Aldred’s Historical Notes* (UA).

⁶³ Everitt, Alan, (ed): *Perspectives in English Urban History* (1973) p. 235.

⁶⁴ 1901 census data: Royle, Stephen, A: ‘The Development of Small Towns in Britain’, in Dauntton, Martin, (ed): *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain* Vol. III 1840-1950 (Cambridge, 2000) p. 169.

⁶⁵ Traylen: *Uppingham* p. 8.

before leaving it spread out to dry on bushes or grass)⁶⁶ and olive-green on Wednesday thanks to the gathering of sheep and horses at the market: 'Wednesday's water, *horribile dictu*, was after filtering used extensively for brewing beer. Of the colour of weak coffee and with a strong odour, it was much esteemed for this purpose'.⁶⁷

It had been common practice for waste of all sorts to be thrown into pits behind dwellings.⁶⁸ The earliest privies were built over these ashpits, later filled in and replaced with large buckets. Many of Uppingham's cobbled streets were still largely dirty and ill-drained: in 1866 some were replaced two centuries after they had first been laid down,⁶⁹ and generations of Uppingham schoolboys remembered the 'obnoxious cobbles' of the High Street.⁷⁰

These problems had been exacerbated by the town's growing population, which had to be housed in limited space; over time, building had tended to take place not on former open fields now enclosed, but *behind* the existing street-front houses and shops. Gardens had been turned into yards as cottages were erected in small spaces – often with restricted access through existing buildings or down short lanes. The wealthier citizens tended by contrast to move to the edge of the town, while the poor became concentrated in certain areas such as Stockerston Road and Adderley Street.⁷¹

⁶⁶ ULHSG: *Uppingham in 1802* p. 55.

⁶⁷ UA: Rome, RC: *The Story of a School 1584-1948*: typescript.

⁶⁸ Bell, David: *Leicestershire and Rutland Privies* (Newbury, 2000) p. 9.

⁶⁹ USM March 1866.

⁷⁰ Ibid Summer 1880: article on *Mr Hodgkinson 1855-1880*.

⁷¹ Rogers: *Making of Uppingham* p. 23.

In 1819 the Rectory manor court heard a complaint of nuisances in the wash pond ‘by animals being thrown therein and the mud suffered to remain too long’.⁷²

In this era there were some areas of particular concern. One was Ragmans Row (or Rag Row) – a group of cottages and shacks off North Street West, where “the houses were of the poorest – mud walls with very low doors and unglazed windows”, eight small dwellings housing 36 people including (amongst others) several paupers and a scavenger, a washerwoman, a laundress and a pauper shepherd. The acquisition by the school of many of the properties along the south side of High Street West drove families into places such as Deans Terrace and Wades Yard; many poorer inhabitants were housed in back yards. Innocents Yard had a density of occupation of 122 persons per acre.⁷³

After centuries during which sewage and rain-water had flowed more or less unchecked (apart from a rudimentary and small-scale system of wooden drains installed around 1786),⁷⁴ a main sewer had been laid through the northern part of the town along the High Street and North Street in 1857-8. But it had been built only four or five feet deep,⁷⁵ with stoneware pipes of 12 and 15 inch diameter,⁷⁶ and the system had never fully been completed. A new, deeper main drain, known locally as ‘the new south sewer’ had been constructed along South Lane in 1872, connecting with the older one to the east and running along Stockerston Road to the west of the High Street, with branch extensions at various points. A sewage outfall works had been

⁷² UA: Rectory Manor of Uppingham Court Roll Vol. VI, 1782-1851: 23 October 1819.

⁷³ ULHSG: *Uppingham in 1851* p. 36. Ragman’s Row lasted until the late 1880s, or just after.

⁷⁴ According to a cutting in an Uppingham scrapbook owned by Peter Lane.

⁷⁵ Field: *Report* p. 2.

⁷⁶ UA: Letter from Sir Charles Adderley to LGB Nov 1875.

added in 1874-5 near Seaton Lane, to the south-east of town. As a system to serve a growing town and school, however, it was seriously inadequate.

House drainage was frequently unconnected to these new drains – which prompted a sanitary expert (Rogers Field, reporting to the RSA) to describe Uppingham as ‘still a cesspool town’.⁷⁷ He could not examine every house, but he estimated that three-quarters of them drained into cesspits, and of 379 houses visited, only 84 drained into the sewer system. 174 houses had installed water closets which still drained straight into cesspools, often in gardens. 34 houses shared exit pipes with next-door properties (with the consequent risk that waste might back up into a neighbour’s drains or even into the closet itself). Of the remainder, 6 had pail and earth closets in the house. 81 had no indoor facilities, but used outside privies in which the waste was mixed either with water or with dry earth and ash. Many of these were, he believed, inadequate or broken-down.

There was a second potential problem: in 1875 Uppingham still had no waterworks. It relied on well-water (public or private) for drinking, and for servicing any water-closets. The geology of the area suggested that the well water ought to be healthy. The land around the town had long ridges of low but steep hills separated by fertile valleys,⁷⁸ thus channeling surface water effectively into streams supplying wells in the basements or gardens of many local properties – including the boarding houses owned by the school.

⁷⁷ PRO/TNA MH12/9815: LGB notes (n/d), quoting Field: *Report* p 2. Ch 4, section 8 explains why he was reporting.

⁷⁸ Lewis, Samuel: *A Topographical Dictionary of England* Vol. 4 (1848) p. 420.

A small tributary of the river Welland flowed through the town.⁷⁹ On its south-east side, Uppingham was flanked by Lincolnshire limestone (richly fossil-bearing),⁸⁰ which stretches from Northamptonshire into Lincolnshire – thought to be generally healthy as a water source. To the north-west anyone digging through the upper lias clay and the Northampton sand ironstone (known locally as the ‘kale’) to a depth of twenty to thirty feet would reach the blue lias clay and a plentiful water supply. One observer noted:

The soil is of red appearance. Beneath, to the depth generally of two or three feet, is a shady red stone, and under this as far as it has been worked, either a red stone, or a blue stone encrusted with red, of variable thickness, and a very stiff blue clay which makes good bricks. The red stone is soft and easily worked; the blue is much harder: both are used for building.⁸¹

Theophilus Rowe, who lived on the west part of the High Street in 1875, drew on his memories twenty-five years later, (in 1900, by which time the Uppingham epidemic had taken place and bacteriology had moved on apace),⁸² to give a less flattering view:

Dig down anywhere in Uppingham for 14 feet through the kale, and then 4 feet further into the lias clay, and you have on your own premises a draw-

⁷⁹ Its name is not known, although some believe that it was colloquially known as ‘piss brook’ at this time – possibly a play on words for the nearby village of Bisbrooke, to which it flows when it leaves Uppingham.

⁸⁰ Jones, Clive: ‘Geology in Rutland’ in *Rutland Natural History Society Annual Report 2000* (Stamford, 2000): Rutland Library Service Local Studies ref. 508.42545 gives more detail.

⁸¹ Lewis: *Topography* pp. 420-421.

⁸² Jones: ‘Geology’.

well, not too deep, with a water-holding cistern at the bottom. But the water?

The kale no doubt is an excellent filter; in ordinary times its loose joints aerate the drops as they trickle through, and the iron with which it is tinged disinfects them. And in fact there have been... many long periods during which this filtration has sufficed, and sanitary statistics have not claimed attention.

Uppingham was always by tradition a healthy place, rather priding itself on its bracing breezes and plentiful springs. But can we doubt that from time to time within the town area not only the pure rain-drops from the sky but many drops not so pure filtered through the loose kale, and that in those sparkling wells from time to time there sported millions of bacteria, enough to account for whole consorts of fevers?⁸³

There had been a scheme as early as 1826 for supplying water 'from a fountain above the town... The spring throws up without intermission a very large supply of excellent water, well situated for being conveyed by pipes...' ⁸⁴ Little seems to have come from it however, and half a century later those who had no wells of their own had to trundle water-carts or carry buckets to public supply points, from a series of springs all over Uppingham. ⁸⁵ The town spring, to the south of the Stockerston Road at the west end of the town was particularly heavily used; its feeders passed quite near to the Lower School. ⁸⁶ There were two other public wells, one in the market place (erected in 1818) and the other a short distance away outside the front of the Methodist chapel. ⁸⁷ In

⁸³ USM 1900.

⁸⁴ *Mercury* June 1826: also Traylen, T: *Uppingham* p. 16.

⁸⁵ Haviland, Alfred: *Report on the Geographical Distribution of Fever within the Area of the Combined Sanitary Authorities in the Counties of Northampton, Leicester, Rutland and Bucks 11 July 1874* (i.e. before the typhoid outbreak).

⁸⁶ Field: *Report* p. 5. It was closed in 1911.

⁸⁷ Matthews: 'The New Water Supply' in Frowde, GC, (ed): *Borth Centenary Magazine* (Uppingham, 1977) p. 25.

addition there were pumps in many of the courts and yards and ‘a fine stone drinking trough’ at the bottom of Leamington Terrace.⁸⁸

Many properties had their private water supply, from springs, wells and ponds. Deeds often recorded rights of access to a pump on a neighbour’s yard.⁸⁹ At the beginning of the century the innkeeper of the Chequers inn had laid an unauthorised pipe from a public spring adjoining the horse pond into her premises.⁹⁰ It is likely that many of the inns brewed their own beer.

No amount of sound geology, however, could make up for pollution – especially on the north-western side of the town, where most of the school houses were situated.

Manure heaps were one source of it; for example, the heap in Reeves Yard in 1863 was right next to a pump.⁹¹ ‘Uppingham was unkempt; its houses were tumbledown, yards untidy, heaps unfenced; it was unpleasing to the eye and unsavoury to the nose.’⁹²

3) TOWN AND SCHOOL

In one respect Uppingham was an unusual town. Within its 3,000 or so population there was a school sub-community comprising nearly 15% of its total, in term-time at least. It had once been a small Elizabethan grammar school, and it had had barely a dozen pupils as recently as 1839.⁹³ The Elizabethan schoolroom, the original building from its foundation in 1584, lay just below the church to the south-east.

⁸⁸ ULHSG: *Uppingham in 1851* p. 48.

⁸⁹ ULHSG: *Uppingham in 1802* p. 31.

⁹⁰ UA: Rectory Manor of Uppingham Court Roll Vol. VI 1782-1851, 15 October 1802.

⁹¹ UA: Manor of Preston and Uppingham Court Roll Vol. 4 p. 2, 1863.

⁹² Rigby, Cormac: ‘The Life and Influence of Edward Thring’ (Oxford D.Phil. thesis, 1968) ch. 6 p. 5.

⁹³ Matthews: *By God’s Grace* p. 57.

Over the previous twenty-five years it had been re-founded by its headmaster, Revd. Edward Thring. He had been appointed in 1853, and had turned it into a boarding community of over 300 boys, together with well over 100 adults (masters and their families and house servants) who occupied over a dozen boarding houses.⁹⁴ Some of these houses were Uppingham's newest and largest properties. By 1875 the growth of the school had put pressure on the town's public services – or lack of them.

Town and school personnel interconnected with each other in a number of different ways. The school invited townspeople to some of its events; there was a school concert in March 1875 featuring Josef Joachim, the leading violinist of his day.⁹⁵ School pupils regularly gave concerts and dramatic readings for townspeople; there had been a performance of Sheridan's *School for Scandal* in the schoolroom in December 1874.⁹⁶ Thring was keen to foster links between school and town, and was aware that the School had much better facilities than the town; he had proposed establishing a recreation ground on the Leicester Road, with a bowling green and archery and croquet facilities.⁹⁷ The school gave an annual Christmas party for children from the workhouse situated on the Leicester Road a few hundred yards away.

⁹⁴ UA: information drawn from *Uppingham School Roll 1824-1931* (USR: sixth issue, 1932), and 1871 census.

⁹⁵ USM 1875: he was a great friend of the school's Director of Music, Paul David. See Graham, *Four Years* p. 47.

⁹⁶ USM 1885.

⁹⁷ *Mercury* 13 August 1875.

There was also the day-to-day movement of school personnel between different parts of the town (as the map shows).⁹⁸ Unlike some of the major boarding schools, founded in the mid-nineteenth century, Uppingham School was a dispersed community, rather than a school built on a single campus. The houses (with their own individual characters and gardens), and other school buildings were mostly situated along the western part of the High Street, but spread out for some distance along the main east-west road through the town. There were four other houses about half a mile from the rest, on the hillside to the south.⁹⁹

This resulted in continuous daily contact between town and school as pupils and masters went to and fro from houses to lessons (taught by housemasters in their house halls and by other staff in makeshift classrooms and laboratories all over the town),¹⁰⁰ or to visit their friends in other houses, or as they took part in afternoon, races and steeplechases and paper-chases along the surrounding roads and fields¹⁰¹ - following hounds or exploring nearby Stoke and Wardley woods.¹⁰² One housemaster's wife kept a diary, which describes housemasters' wives running the domestic side of the house (including its catering arrangements), sending out and accepting dinner invitations from other houses, corresponding with parents, walking the dogs, attending chapel and watching cricket matches or athletics races.¹⁰³

All this activity involved a large amount of contact (and friendships) with people in the town. Some staff appear to have been conscious that relying solely on the school

⁹⁸ Map based one included in Field: *Report*.

⁹⁹ *USR*.

¹⁰⁰ Graham: *Forty Years* pp. 6-7.

¹⁰¹ *USM* 1885.

¹⁰² Graham: *Forty Years* p. 5.

¹⁰³ UA: Haslam, Mrs SLE: Diary 1871-2.

community for their social life would have risked becoming introverted and claustrophobic. Another housemaster observed on one occasion: ‘As masters we are admirable, but as men we vegetate’.¹⁰⁴ It may be no coincidence that he had grown up as a day-boy in London rather than as a rural boarding pupil.¹⁰⁵

There were occasional tensions too. With so many boisterous schoolboys living in this small town alongside its other inhabitants and sharing its narrow streets, co-existence was not always easy, and it is hardly surprising that relationships sometimes became strained.¹⁰⁶ Thring, complained in his diary in 1860:

A stupid complaint from Lord Berners again about the boys being in his wood. I don’t think he ever can have been at a public school, and he is bitten with the curse of the English squirearchy, the pheasant mania.¹⁰⁷

A former pupil remembered:

In the [eighteen] fifties there was no love lost between town and school, and a collision with ‘the cads’ or a chevy from [chase by] a labourer in the fields was a common thing. We were always easy to tell by our caps... The worst time, and as a rule we brought it on ourselves, was in winter when there was snow. Then a ‘fight with the cads’ was the proper constitutional thing, and we

¹⁰⁴ Rowe, BH: *Memoir*, quoted by Rigby, Cormac in his unpublished manuscript (n/d) ch. 14 p. 7. words attributed to Howard Candler.

¹⁰⁵ *USM* 1913.

¹⁰⁶ Bamford, TW: *Rise of the Public Schools: A Study of Boys’ Public Boarding Schools in England and Wales from 1837 to the Present Day* (1967) p. 195 suggests that Uppingham was not alone in this respect. The situation seems to have been much more serious in Rugby and Harrow, where ‘local warfare’ existed.

¹⁰⁷ UA: *Diary*, 135.

fought with some fury, more especially when we found that they were not fighting fair, but were putting stones into their snowballs. They generally lined the churchyard railings, and fired at us from above as we came from the school 'quad' or the market-place...¹⁰⁸ Some pupils preferred to go round in groups after dark.¹⁰⁹

The same writer paints a revealing picture of a town which was wary of the school:

It would not be unnatural to suppose that the town was proud of its School; or at all events, as it grew in numbers, and trade of all kinds kept increasing, that the tradesmen would recognize that it at least had its uses. But it was not so.

The farmers and publicans spoke of 'them dratted scholars', and the tradesmen would, with few exceptions, say that the School was nothing to them, and that they were best without it.¹¹⁰

On the other hand, even though fraternisation of pupils' with townspeople was not encouraged, some pupils made friends of those living in School Lane and Leamington Terrace. They also managed to sneak into market day and the two annual fairs.¹¹¹

Finally, the school must have had a significant impact on the town's economic fortunes, in two ways. The town had a large number of shops and small business in relation to its size and population, suggesting that there were plenty of people with shops or businesses in the town who relied on the school and its pupils as

¹⁰⁸ Anon (Rawnsley, WF): *Early Days at Uppingham by An Old Boy* (1904) p. 121.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid p. 120.

¹¹⁰ Ibid p. 119.

¹¹¹ ULHSG: *Uppingham in 1851* p. 54.

customers.¹¹² Moreover, given that the pupils' parents could afford the school's fees, their son's collective spending power must have been very large when compared with that of most of Uppingham's townspeople. The bakeries sold plum shuttles (pronounced *shittles*), a type of buns especially popular with children¹¹³ - and, no doubt, with the pupils at the school, who particularly liked the hot rolls produced in the mornings by Loves and Baines.¹¹⁴ Henry Kirby, the grocer in the market place, sold ice creams and lemonade to boys during their free time in the afternoons, as well as strawberries and cakes; the editor of the *USM* complained that the large amount of time that they whiled away in Kirby's establishment could have been better spent back in the school, writing articles for his publication.¹¹⁵

John Hawthorn (at the post office and bookshop) was another shopkeeper well-known to the boys: 'garbed in somewhat clerical clothes, with rather short trousers displaying white socks, a clerical hat and a monocle attached to a broad black silk ribbon. Well might he have featured in a Trollope novel... a distinctly awe-inspiring figure';¹¹⁶ the boys who stocked up their supplies of stationery from his bookshop had a strong affection for him and nicknamed him *Sempy*, short for *sempiternal* (or eternal); he was a man 'always of the same youthful manner and appearance',¹¹⁷ who - it was rumoured - had been in the town for ever, and who traded there for nearly half a century.¹¹⁸ Not surprisingly, he was one of the school's strongest supporters.

¹¹² Ibid p. 1. The 1851 census showed a large number of double occupations, and households headed by women. The school's growth must have created plenty of small-business opportunities.

¹¹³ Palmer: *Folklore* p. 253.

¹¹⁴ *USM* 1876. See appendix 5 section 1.

¹¹⁵ *USM* 1885.

¹¹⁶ Graham: *Forty Years*, pp. 74-75.

¹¹⁷ *USM* 1899: obituary.

¹¹⁸ Ibid: letter from WF Rawnsley, June 1899.

The decentralised nature of the school increased the number of local suppliers whose business well-being depended on a successful and healthy school (in every sense).

Because of the dispersed houses, with pupils feeding in their own house dining rooms, and with no central catering or purchasing system, each housemaster and his wife made their own decisions about suppliers. Hawthorn also had town loyalties and ties however: not only did he supply the school with books and print its exam papers, but he was also a supplier to the rector and the church, and he provided their service sheets).¹¹⁹ Grocer Henry Kirby was another tradesman with many connections in the school.¹²⁰

The school was also a large-scale employer. Its pupils and staff all had to be fed, accommodated, and provided for in a variety of ways. The houses employed nearly 100 living-in staff between them; the 1871 census showed that four of them had between 7 and 9 each - including various governesses, a few footmen, numerous cooks, nurses, parlourmaids and kitchenmaids and one 'boots'.¹²¹

To this would have been added a large army of people living in the town but working in the school by day – self-employed or on piece-work.¹²² Houses had to be repaired and altered; some were still being built or developed. Furniture and equipment had to be ordered and maintained, and gardens tended. In an age when few parents visited the school, boys had to be clothed, and their clothes needed cleaning and repairing.

¹¹⁹ UA has examples: confirmed by Peter Lane.

¹²⁰ Graham: *Forty Years* pp. 75-76.

¹²¹ 1871 census.

¹²² ULHSG: *Uppingham in 1851* p. 21.

Farm produce would have been purchased locally by the school. The food shops in particular must have noticed a big drop in their turnover when the holidays began. All in all, town and school were highly interdependent economically: the school would suffer in reputation and well-being if local businesses failed. For those businesses the presence and goodwill of the school was a key factor in their continuing prosperity and development.

The interlocking set of social and economic relationships between town and school can be demonstrated by studying the 1871 census returns for the High Street. Within less than half a mile it included a number of boarding houses, including those of Edward Little (Little, his wife, one child and a sister-in-law, plus four domestic servants and fourteen boarders), Sam Haslam (wife, six servants and thirty boarders), Revd. Walter Earle (with wife and family of five small children, eight domestic servants and 27 schoolboys), and William Campbell with wife, seven children, sister/governess, eight servants, four overnight visitors and 33 boarders. Across the road were the houses of Theophilus Rowe (wife, four servants and 31 boarders) and Bennett Hesketh Williams (wife, five children and two other relatives staying, six servants and 16 boarders). Their more well-to do neighbours included professional people: Guy the bank manager, Bell the doctor, Pateman the solicitor, and others such as master butcher and multiple shopkeeper Peter Fryer and successful farmers William Mould and John Shield.¹²³

But by no means all the neighbours were so prosperous. Sandwiched in between these professional men lived a network of small businessmen, traders and artisans –

¹²³ 1871 census. NB that the spelling is different from that of the Sheild legal family.

including a master boot-maker, a saddler, a shoemaker, an auctioneer-cum-estate agent, a master watchmaker, a chair-maker, a laundress, a grocer, two drapers, a hairdresser, and an innkeeper. Further up the street were a mason (married to a dressmaker), a railway agent, another draper, a tailor with wife and four children, and a plumber and painter (with wife and five children) who lived cheek by jowl with one of the curates. With so many trades, goods and services represented amongst their neighbours, it seems likely that the housemasters' personal and business relationships would have overlapped to a sizeable degree.¹²⁴

4) UPPINGHAM SCHOOL AND ITS HEADMASTER

By 1875 Revd Edward Thring had been headmaster of Uppingham School for twenty-two years. He was extrovert and enthusiastic, but also committed to spiritual simplicity.¹²⁵ He had little time for ritualism or doctrinal minutiae, in contrast to the high-church rector.¹²⁶ He had a brain which moved in intuitive leaps and drove a passionate and impulsive nature.

Although he came to Uppingham with little experience of school-mastering, his years there had given him full opportunity to develop a distinctive educational philosophy: one whose implementation he would fight tenaciously to protect if anything threatened his school. In 1875 he was also just emerging from a period of prolonged battles to protect the school externally. All these issues are explored in appendix 2.

¹²⁴ 1871 census: information about High Street West.

¹²⁵ A description provided by Cormac Rigby in conversation, 2002.

¹²⁶ *USM* 1926: CW Cobb, a housemaster, wrote (many years later) that 'matters of ecclesiastical ceremony, of procedure or of posture were to him unimportant'.

Archdeacon Robert Johnson had endowed schools and almshouses in Uppingham and Oakham in 1584,¹²⁷ but the schools had remained quite small for over two centuries thereafter. Thring's arrival coincided with a great expansion in middle-class education as the Victorian industrial boom began;¹²⁸ significantly for future events, a number of his pupils' parents were doctors.¹²⁹ Between 1853 and 1875 he had transformed Uppingham from a typical small country grammar school into a school with a well-known reputation and a national catchment of boarders.¹³⁰ The local places for day-boys had largely faded out.¹³¹ His original 43 pupils grew to 100 within six years, doubled again within the next four and had reached his chosen ceiling of 300 in 1865.

We know where roughly 95% of the pupils lived in 1875. Apart from ten living abroad, they came from all over Great Britain and Ireland. Barely a dozen of them were from Uppingham or the surrounding villages; the school had moved well away from its local, free grammar school roots.¹³² Liverpool/Manchester and Lancashire accounted for nearly 70 of them, and another 42 are listed in the *USR* as coming from London – two areas of the country which had recently enjoyed the most advanced public health arrangements under Sir John Simon and WH Duncan respectively.¹³³

¹²⁷ Page: *Victoria History: Rutland* Vol. 1 pp. 261-297 gives a full discussion of how the two schools had developed.

¹²⁸ Hoyland, Geoffrey: *The Man who Made a School: Thring of Uppingham* (1946) p. 36. See also Bamford, *Rise of the Public Schools* pp. 17-38.

¹²⁹ *USR*. It does not list fathers by occupation, but there are references in Thring's diaries to doctor parents. See also Hoyland: *The Man who Made a School* p. 36.

¹³⁰ Rogers: *The Making of Uppingham* p. 25.

¹³¹ ULHSG: *Uppingham in 1851* p. 55. These had, however, been fee-paying in recent times.

¹³² For discussion of this trend in similar schools, see Bamford: *Rise of the Public Schools* pp. 198-201.

¹³³ This is significant in view of the events described in ch 4.

By 1872 Thring had 21 teaching staff – a considerable running cost, but one which he believed to be essential.¹³⁴ He also laid down that 23 should be the optimum size for a class and 31 for a boarding house.¹³⁵ Not surprisingly, a number of his staff doubted his arguments for such limits, especially in times when budgets were tight, and by 1875 three of the 12 houses had crept up to 37 or 38 pupils; most of the others (including Thring's own) were between 30 and 34 and the rest had between 20 and 30.¹³⁶

Eleven of his staff were housemasters - in addition to himself - and there was also Revd RJ Hodgkinson at the Lower (junior) School – a legally and financially separate institution from Uppingham School itself, but closely allied to it in terms of pupils sent on to Thring for their later education. Unlike the houses in many of the boarding schools founded in the nineteenth century, Uppingham's boarding facilities were not to be found merely in a series of buildings on a single campus served by a communal dining hall. They were physically separate from each other (and from the central school buildings), individually designed to reflect the wishes of the housemasters who built them, each with their own staff and house dining hall. It made each of them (and their ethos) varied and distinctive. It may also have contributed to a plumbing system of uneven quality with little central control: boys washed in the mornings in chilly stone-floored washrooms with rows of stone basins filled with water from cisterns which took up to two hundred strokes of the pump serving them.¹³⁷

¹³⁴ In that year, in reply to a question from the secretary of the Public Schools commissioners, he stated that these cost about £23,535 per annum. Rigby: unpublished manuscript ch. 9 p. 3 suggests that staff costs put a very severe pressure on Thring financially.

¹³⁵ Matthews: *By God's Grace* p. 85.

¹³⁶ *USR* 1875.

¹³⁷ Hoyland: *The Man Who Made a School* p. 46.

The housemasters were mostly men of at least moderate private means and thus able to afford to commission their own architects and build their own houses.¹³⁸ Some converted an existing house in the town or bought one which was already a going concern. A few started off in a small house in the town and then built a larger one on the outskirts.¹³⁹ Unlike modern counterparts, they had a direct financial stake in the Uppingham enterprise and a number appear to have taken out large mortgages on their houses. George Mullins started off in Red House, but then paid £3,100 to buy West Deyne from his predecessor,¹⁴⁰ and took out a loan of £2,000 to do so.¹⁴¹ Housemasters would eventually sell these houses on to their successors.¹⁴² Meanwhile their investment would be at risk if the school were to fail – and in a small country town there might well be a shortage of alternative uses for (and buyers of) large properties if things went badly.

As a housemaster himself, Thring had a common financial interest with others in the collective health and strength of the school. If his staff had risked much in terms of their capital investment, he had committed even more himself. He was always in debt – as early as 1857 to the tune of over £2,750,¹⁴³ through guaranteeing and paying the salaries of his growing staff. He was forced to take out a loan of nearly £2,000 over fourteen years from the Wellingborough Building Society; it concerned him greatly

¹³⁸ Honey, John: *Tom Brown's Universe* (1977) pp. 297-298: 'At Uppingham. Thring, who had no margin in the endowment to expand his school, guaranteed his masters to supply them with boys if they would build (for perhaps £8,000) boarding houses as private profit-making ventures'.

¹³⁹ E.g. William Earle, Usher (Second Master) under Holden, and brother of Walter who built Brooklands, on the London Road.

¹⁴⁰ UA: Tate, David: 'West Deyne: A Short History' (unpublished typescript).

¹⁴¹ Matthews: *By God's Grace* p. 109. Hodgkinson moved to run the Lower School in 1867. He built a house in the grand style of a French chateau, at a cost of no less than £12,000.

¹⁴² See appendix 6 section 3.

¹⁴³ Matthews: *By God's Grace* p. 84.

and wore him down, but he tried to keep these money worries from his wife and children.¹⁴⁴

He also had one other very direct instrument of control. In the 1870s, parents paid boarding fees to the housemaster, and only tuition fees to the school itself.¹⁴⁵

Housemasters made profits (or losses) from their houses, and derived most of their income from being housemasters. They were paid comparatively little in fixed salary as classroom teachers. Thus they relied on Thring's recommendation;¹⁴⁶ a housemaster judged by him to be inadequate to the task could soon be starved of prospective parents. They had to conform to his standards of food and accommodation as well as supervision and care. If they pared away at standards in order to increase their profits they could be rapidly frozen out, and he was resolute that he would not let them increase their numbers purely to increase their revenue.¹⁴⁷

Building up the houses took time – and so did the construction of a fiercely loyal team of people to run them. Thring made some choices in the earlier years which he came to regret.¹⁴⁸ But the housemasters of the 1870s were a more settled group. They were nearly all graduates of Oxford or Cambridge and mostly from professional families, although few had any background in teaching.¹⁴⁹ A number of them would run their house for over thirty years.¹⁵⁰ Besides Thring himself, ten were in holy orders. Nearly all had a wife; Thring, happily married with five children of his own, regarded the

¹⁴⁴ UA: Diary I p. 36.

¹⁴⁵ Wright's *Directory*.

¹⁴⁶ Hodgkinson at the Lower School was also reliant on Thring's recommendation to parents.

¹⁴⁷ Wright's *Directory*. Thring himself was paid £200 per year plus a capitation fee for each boy by 1880.

¹⁴⁸ Rigby: 'Life and Influence' ch. 6 p. 130: for example, JR Blakiston.

¹⁴⁹ See Venn, John and Venn, JA, (comp): *Alumni Cantabrigienses* (1922), and Foster, Joseph: *Alumni Oxonienses* (1888).

¹⁵⁰ Matthews: *By God's Grace* p. 180: Sam Haslam for 37 years, George Mullins and George Christian for 33 years and William Campbell for 32.

part which the housemaster's wife played in each house as one of the most humanizing influences.¹⁵¹

The school's scheme of management had been revised as a result of the Endowed Schools Act of 1869 and the resultant Taunton Commission. Thring explained the school's financial arrangements in some detail in 1880:¹⁵²

Each boy pays £70 per annum to the housemaster. This sum does not pass through the hands of the governing body. Each boy pays £40 per annum as tuition fee [up from £30 in 1875]. This sum does pass through the hands of the Governing body, and is now distributed as follows: One sixth, £6.15s to the headmaster, fixed by law as the lowest proportion; £24. 18s per boy is assigned for the payment of masters up to the number of 320 boys; £1. 10s per boy for current expenses; £6. 15s per boy for reserve fund. £100 per annum is assigned for lectures, readings, concerts etc; £100 for prizes in the school. There is also a sum of £1,100 per annum from the original foundation, which is mainly expended on providing exhibitions from the school to any university or place of higher education, of the value of £60, £50 and £40, three every year, tenure for three years, and in a small salary of £200 per year for the headmaster.

Thus Thring and the housemasters effectively had control of £70 for each of the 300 or so pupils – c£21,000, (out of which they had to pay all the boarding expenses, after which they took their profits or losses, and decided whether to contribute to future

¹⁵¹ Rawnsley, WF: *Edward Thring: Maker of Uppingham School* (1926) p. 22.

¹⁵² Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 pp. 201-202. See also Page: *Victoria History: Rutland* Vol. 1 p. 296.

building and staffing projects). The governing body controlled £30 per pupil in 1875, (c. £9,000), together with the income of the Archdeacon Johnson charity set up by the founder three hundred years earlier. In the early 1870s this was drawn largely from rental income on lands in Warwickshire and Lincolnshire, and amounted to £4,280, of which 4/7 was spent roughly equally on the two schools in Uppingham and Oakham, and the remaining 3/7 was specifically designated for the almshouses.¹⁵³

It is clear from Thring's statement about the cost of education at a good boarding school, made to the commissioners in 1866, that he felt that Uppingham's fees were barely adequate for the efficient running of his school.¹⁵⁴

Thring and his housemasters did not finance just the boarding houses. As the school grew, they were called upon to subscribe to a whole variety of school building projects which the trustees were unable or unwilling to finance. Shortly after his arrival in 1853 the masters had given £500 towards the restoration of the parish church, which the school used daily in the early years. However, by 1858 he was commissioning a leading architect of the day, GE Street, to draw up plans for the school's own chapel, and for a new school room.

A year later, responding to an unexpected opportunity to purchase a key site, he persuaded the masters to buy the Cross Keys inn for £1,130, just to the west of his own boarding house.¹⁵⁵ The trustees (who had become involved in a long dispute with the masters over the choice of the chapel architect) reluctantly agreed to borrow

¹⁵³ Parliamentary papers: Annual Reports of the Charity Commissioners: 1875 XX 13 and 1876 XX 19. The figure was unchanged over several years, suggesting that the funds may not have been very actively managed.

¹⁵⁴ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 pp. 189-193. See also Page: *Victoria History: Rutland* Vol. 1 p. 294.

¹⁵⁵ For details, see Matthews: *By God's Grace* pp. 93-94 and p. 98.

money to pay for the schoolroom, but the £10,000 for the chapel was largely financed through a general subscription from masters, parents and friends. It was completed in 1872.¹⁵⁶ These buildings were constructed to a high specification and were substantial in size. Simultaneous expense was incurred through a similarly ambitious gymnasium. This too was largely funded by the masters, who were simultaneously contributing to several other projects.¹⁵⁷

The result of all these building projects was that the masters had financed an increasing proportion of the school's development. In the mid-1860s, over 90% of the school's buildings, land and equipment had been financed by Thring and his staff, while the trust had provided a mere 8.75%.¹⁵⁸ By 1875 the masters had spent over £40,000 on buildings,¹⁵⁹ in the process sinking into them much of their own capital and most of their energy. The school was prospering, but if times were to change for any reason they would all have plenty at risk. Thring had the most to lose of all – not only his livelihood and the fabric into which he had sunk much of his capital, but also the essentially personal creation which his school represented.¹⁶⁰ There was also the potential for dispute between the masters and the governing body in any time of economic or other difficulty, given that the personal finances of Thring and the masters were so inextricably bound up with those of the school itself.

¹⁵⁶ Rigby manuscript ch .11 p. 6. One master, WF Witts (who had left Uppingham by 1875), contributed £1,000. The masters were also required by the trustees to contribute at least £3,000 towards the new schoolroom.

¹⁵⁷ *USM* 1900. Hodgkinson and Candler started donations to a fund to buy property which could be knocked down to make way for new five courts in the early 1870s; Thring, Mullins and Haslam followed their example, and over £850 was raised in all. Candler gave selflessly - including £1,220 used to buy a games field on the Leicester Road – which he then leased back to the school. Meanwhile another £3,000 had been spent on a sanatorium.

¹⁵⁸ Matthews: *By God's Grace* pp. 94 and p. 106.

¹⁵⁹ Kelly's *Directory*.

¹⁶⁰ Rawnsley, HD: *Edward Thring: Teacher and Poet* (1899) pp. 91-92. At the time of the Tercentenary Appeal in 1884, Thring stated that £91,000 had been expended over thirty years.

5) CONCLUSION

Thus, by 1875 the town of Uppingham had grown rapidly, but its sanitary provision was falling behind both what was needed for good health and what local expectation demanded. The school's growth had greatly exacerbated the pressure on public services.

Having spent over two decades building up his school and seeing off both local and national threats to its well-being, Thring would be likely to fight very hard against any circumstances or individuals who threatened its future success. But he would have to do so within the context of a school which was interdependent economically and socially with the town around it. The school depended on the town for its services, and the town on the wealth generated by the school. If that balance were ever threatened, the impact on both would be dramatic.

CHAPTER 2 – LOCAL SOCIETY AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

This chapter sets the events of 1875-7 in their political and economic context. It explains how local influence was inextricably linked to land tenure, with property concentrated in comparatively few hands at the top, and amongst a large number of shopkeepers and small businessmen at the lower levels. The town guardians and school trustees both included in their membership some prominent leaders of local society. It describes the personalities and outlooks, and traces the careers, of the two leading clergymen who dominated these two bodies.

The second part traces the political and financial developments in public health in this period. It explains how many of the ratepayers had strong reasons to resist extravagant spending, especially at a time of incipient agricultural recession. It shows how the 1872 and 1875 Public Health Acts put unprecedented demands on the voluntary local authorities, which those authorities were poorly equipped to meet. Finally it explains the internal tensions within the LGB, which was charged with overseeing those authorities and ensuring that parliament's intentions were carried out in the localities.

1) LOCAL INFLUENCE, POWER AND LAND

Uppingham was situated in a county which was quintessentially rural. Of Rutland's 96,000 acres, nearly 79,000 (82%) were under cultivation of some sort – with 42,000 acres given over to arable and 36,000 to pasture.¹ The latter was occupied by 13,000 cattle, 110,000 sheep and about 6,000 pigs – a level of livestock which caused

¹ Page, William, (ed): *The Victoria County History: Rutland* Vol. 2 (1935) p. 247.

poachers to be a problem, especially of deer, pheasants or hare.² Besides land for grazing there was also some forest and a few local quarries,³ as well as areas of nursery and market garden. Crops included wheat, barley, oats, rye, peas and beans – as well as potatoes, turnips and swedes, carrots and cabbages. Stilton cheese was also produced locally.⁴ The 1851 census had listed 21 farmers, whose average holding was just over 56 acres – although some (e.g. William Mould) held much more. Only two of them had more than six employees. There were also several dozen allotment holders.⁵

The influence of the leading members of the Rutland gentry was exercised largely through the ownership of land and property. Walford's list for 1876 names 35 families which represented the core of Rutland society,⁶ and although its diminutive size makes statistical comparisons with other counties suspect, an indication of its character is seen in the fact that it had one country house for every 31,000 acres - the highest such distribution of any English county.⁷ Four of the 331 greater landowners in the modern Domesday Book (the blue book) of land ownership, drawn up by John Bateman in 1873, had 9,000 acres or more in Rutland and between them owned half the county. Two of them had their chief seats in Rutland, and the other two just across the border in Lincolnshire. Rutland shared only with Northumberland the fact that more than half its acreage was in the hands of owners of 10,000 acres or more.⁸

² Palmer, Roy: *Folklore of Leicestershire and Rutland* (Wymondham, 1985) p. 210.

³ Kelly's *Directory* 1876.

⁴ Page: *Victoria County History* Vol. 1 p. 247.

⁵ Uppingham Local History Studies Group: *Uppingham in 1851: A Night in the Life of a Thriving Town* (Uppingham, 2001) p. 18.

⁶ Walford, Edward: *The County Families of the United Kingdom* (1876) pp 111-118.

⁷ Westmorland, at 1:449,000, was at the other extreme.

⁸ Beckett, JV: *The English Aristocracy 1660-1914* (Oxford 1986) pp. 52-53.

Bateman records the names of owners of land of more than 3,000 acres with a gross annual value of over £3,000. Of Rutland's total acreage, over 70% (66,294 acres) was owned by one peer, five 'great landowners', and five squires. No fewer than four of this elite group were trustees (governors) of Thring's school: the Earl of Gainsborough (who lived at Exton Park),⁹ Sir John Fludyer (Ayston Hall), George Finch MP (Burley-on-the-Hill) and John Wingfield (Tickencote Hall). Below them, a further 10,017 acres were owned by 'great and lesser yeomen', a high proportion of them (compared with other counties) being clergymen.

Bateman observed that Rutland more than most counties was not good at 'holding on to its acres' (i.e. ensuring that these great landowners concentrated most of their landholdings within the county). Despite the magnificent hunting character of the locality, he identified 16 significant owners of Rutland land whose main estates lay in other counties, and whose total land holdings amounted to an area equivalent to nearly 40% of the county itself. They included the Duke of Rutland (whose vast estates were mainly in Leicestershire and Derbyshire), the Marquis of Exeter (just across the Lincolnshire border at Burghley House, Stamford) and three other school trustees. Two of them lived locally, Edward Conant (at Lyndon Hall)¹⁰ and George Watson (at Rockingham Castle, in Northamptonshire but within sight of Rutland across the Welland valley). The third was the chairman of the trustees, AC Johnson, whose lands were in Lincolnshire at Wytham-on-the-Hill. All these may be assumed to have had a strong vested interest in restricting local tax levels.

⁹ Bateman, John: *The Great Landowners of Great Britain and Ireland* (Leicester, 1971) p. 178.

Lord Gainsborough had 15,076 acres in Rutland, as well as 3,500 acres in 5 other counties.

Fludyer, Finch and Wingfield had, respectively, 2,638/2,000+, 9,183/8,200 and 2,905/600+, spread across 5 other counties.

¹⁰ Bateman: *Landowners* p. 101: he had 1,500 acres in Rutland, plus nearly 4,000 acres in Lincolnshire.

By contrast, at the other end of the scale there was an unusually high proportion of small landholders; the average size of holding in the county (14.75 acres) was the fourth-lowest of the 54 counties in England and Wales which Bateman analysed. There were 458 'small proprietors' holding a total of 6,782 acres, and 132 acres were held by no fewer than 861 cottagers, while 53 public bodies accounted for a further 2,392 acres. The remaining 401 acres was described as 'waste'.

The land tax assessment for 1874/5 shows that 258 people were assessed, of whom three stand out far above the rest.¹¹ Between them they accounted for over 45% of the total assessment. Not surprisingly, one was Lord Gainsborough,¹² who owned two houses and lands on Beaumont Chase. He was a quintessential county landowner – once High Sheriff and subsequently Lord Lieutenant, as well as being a lieutenant-colonel in the Leicestershire yeomanry and (briefly, in 1840-1) a Whig MP.¹³ He had large estates in two other counties,¹⁴ and he owned lands in no fewer than 19 local towns and villages, including nearly all the property in six of them. His total landholding in Rutland was 15,000 acres, with another 3,500 in five other counties. His family (the Noels) had long held the Manor of Uppingham and Preston,¹⁵ and it was said that the Earl could apparently ride from Exton to Uppingham (nearly ten miles) without going off his land.¹⁶

¹¹ ROLLR: Land tax assessment 1874/5 – supplied by Peter Lane.

¹² The 2nd Earl: Charles George Noel (1818-1881).

¹³ *Times* 15 August 1881. and information from Lady Sarah Campden: 'Though he represented Rutland in the Liberal interest, he is ranked in *Dod* of that year as a Conservative'.

¹⁴ *Ibid* 15 August 1881.

¹⁵ Uppingham Local History Studies Group: *Uppingham in 1802: A Year to Remember?* (Uppingham 2002) p. 73.

¹⁶ Information from Lady Sarah Campden.

The second of these large landowners, Sir Charles (CB) Adderley MP, was one of Bateman's 'outsiders'. He had inherited his lands from his uncle.¹⁷ Like Gainsborough, his lands were let out to tenants; his main estates were in Staffordshire and Warwickshire. He was an uncompromising Tory who had opposed Peel on free trade. He had been briefly President of the Board of Health in the Conservative government of 1858-9, and Under-Secretary for the colonies in the administrations of Lord Derby and then Disraeli in the late 1860s. From 1874 he was President of the Board of Trade (1874-8) before going to the House of Lords. He was no great speaker, but he was 'capable business administrator and he could make a plain business statement very well'.¹⁸ He had put tenants into the Hall in High Street East; he never lived in the town. Both Adderley and Gainsborough held buildings and land assessed for rating purposes at over £18.

The third of this trio came a long way behind the first two, but his presence is significant – the rector, William Wales, who was both a school trustee and a town guardian,¹⁹ as well as being chancellor of the Peterborough diocese. Another 18.5% of the land in Rutland was in the hands of ten further owners, who included two other absentees (William Belgrave and Lord Aveland). The remaining 36% was shared between 216 individuals.

The return of owners of land shows that Wales' landownership yielded a gross estimated rent income of no less than £747/17/0.²⁰ He enjoyed rents from those

¹⁷ His uncle was also named CB Adderley.

¹⁸ *Times* 29 March 1905.

¹⁹ Bateman: *Landowners* p. 527: He is described as an 'owner-occupier'. Bateman mentions the difficulties in separating out personal and institutional holdings for clergymen, and states that glebe lands are entered under the names of the incumbent.

²⁰ ROLLR: Return of Owners of Land Vol. II: Rutland (HMSO, 1873).

leasing his glebe land, manorial rents and fines from his copyhold tenants, pensions (in lieu of former tithes) amounting to £6/14/4d per year,²¹ and the annual Easter offering.²² The Rectory manor was smaller than the Preston and Uppingham one.²³ Historically, it comprised land which mostly lay to the west of the Oakham-Kettering road and included much of the land on which the school and its houses now stood. It also enjoyed one advantage over the Preston and Uppingham manor: its entry fines were arbitrary rather than fixed.²⁴

Both manors had once held courts once or twice a year, although these had now fallen into disuse and their powers had been transferred to stewards who were also local solicitors; William Sheild for the Noels and William H Brown for the rector. Sheild was a significant copyhold and freehold property owner in his own right and was also a moneylender.²⁵ Sheild and Brown had both attended the school; Brown was one of six sons of Thomas Brown, solicitor, to do so.²⁶

In Uppingham itself the 1873 return of owners of land produces a similarly revealing picture.²⁷ Five men owned more than 100 acres: Conant, Fludyer, Wales (all trustees) and two town guardians John Parker (a farmer from the nearby village of Preston) and William Sheild. Of the other guardians, two - George Foster (a farmer, but also a property-owning solicitor) and Edmund Robinson (a dealer in corn, glassware and china) - appear in the list of four owners in the 50-100 acre category. William Mould

²¹ UA: information from Peter Lane, based on Rectory Manor of Uppingham Court Rolls Vol. VI.

²² NRO ML598: these were considerable. The 1875 Episcopal Visitation shows separate accounts for home, foreign and local purposes of nearly £20 each.

²³ ULHSG: *Uppingham in 1802* p. 74.

²⁴ ULHSG: *Uppingham in 1851* p. 26.

²⁵ Ibid p. 26.

²⁶ Ibid p. 52.

²⁷ ROLLR: Return of owners of land 1873 Vol. II: Rutland (1873) – supplied by Peter Lane.

(farmer and maltster in the High Street) was one of five in the 20-50 acres list, and William Satchell (a builder) appears in the list of others – along with the guardians' clerk (WH Brown), Thring and five of his staff. The guardians themselves, the school trustees and the churchwardens also appear here as institutional owners.

The list of owners of houses and buildings is also dominated by Gainsborough and Adderley – although guardian William Mould also appears in the highest category. Below them it is possible to identify three groups of people (apart from retired people or those with private means). One is the professionals – one surgeon, three solicitors and two bank managers. The second is the masters themselves – who, with the school itself, collectively contributed between $1/5^{\text{th}}$ and $1/6^{\text{th}}$ of the rates collected.²⁸

The third is the shopkeepers, of whom at least twenty appear in the top one-third of the total list. They cover a wide range of businesses, including draper, ironmonger, grocer, bookseller, chemist and hairdresser, and many must have been suppliers of goods and services to the school as well as to people in the town – trade for which many of them would have been in competition with each other. The assessment does not, however yield information on two issues - the amount of precarious mortgage debt which many of the smaller owners in particular must have carried, or the extent to which landowners passed on rate increases to their tenants.²⁹ Most of the shopkeepers listed in the houses and buildings register were owners, but not all

²⁸ UA: Bell, Thomas: *Letterbook* 1876-1904: Bell to WT Jacob 1 September 1876.

²⁹ ULHSG: *Uppingham in 1851* p. 23: see the example of the decline of William Hopkins and family.

2) PROPERTY INTERESTS: GUARDIANS AND TRUSTEES

The dominance of property interests can also be seen when one looks at the membership of the Uppingham RSA overall.³⁰ Thirty-eight men were guardians at some point during 1875 and 1877,³¹ and most of them can be traced through census and other returns.

Appendix 3 gives details of their occupations and levels of attendance at meetings. Five of them were clergymen, two derived at least part of their income from inns, one was a surgeon and at least four ran local shops or small businesses. The great majority (at least 22)³² were farmers in and around Uppingham and its surrounding villages. Barely half a dozen of them lived in the town itself, and few of them had any other close links with the school to keep them in touch with its affairs.

The landowners included many of the most regular attenders. An analysis of the weekly union meetings between April 1875 and early 1877 (87 in all) suggests that, apart from the chairman,³³ a group of eight predominated. Charles Simkin, union vice-chairman and a gentleman farmer from Wardley, rarely missed a meeting until his death in January 1876. John Woodcock, farmer and railway agent of High Street East, participated in no fewer than 77. Samuel Rooke, a farmer from Gretton (over the border in Northamptonshire) managed 53. George Foster, who lived on the Oakham Road and who farmed other lands at Brooke, attended 43. William Shield, who (in addition to his manorial steward, legal and money-lending roles) was Superintendent Registrar for Births, Marriages and Deaths as well as being the local coroner, attended

³⁰ See this ch., section 4.

³¹ ROLLR DE1381/441: Union Minute Book.

³² The occupations of 4 have proved elusive: see appendix 3.

³³ Revd Barnard Smith, Rector of the nearby village of Glaston: see section 4.

41. Edward Wortley of Ridlington and John Parker of Preston (both farmers) were not far behind, with 35 and 39 attendances respectively. The eighth was the rector, Revd William Wales. He came to only 38 meetings – but the fact that he is usually listed immediately after the Chairman and Vice-Chairman suggests that his local prominence made him influential. Simkin, Foster, Rooke, Shield, Woodcock and Wortley (from 1876) were also on its sanitary sub-committee responsible for public health matters.³⁴

The landed influence is equally strong within the school trustees, who by 1875 were 19 in number. One was the hereditary chairman: ‘the right male heir of the Founder’, Mr AC Johnson. He, along with Gainsborough, Conant, Finch, Fludyer, Watson, Wingfield and Wales have already been identified as significant property holders. Finch was an archetypal landed man: a keen huntsman,³⁵ who entered parliament as Tory MP for Rutland in 1867, held the seat for 40 years and defeated the Liberal candidate in the 1906 re-election with the slogan ‘the agricultural candidate for an agricultural constituency’.³⁶ Hon WC Evans-Freke at nearby Bisbrooke Hall did not own quite enough to make Bateman’s lists, but he was both a trustee and a local guardian. Mr Edward Dawson would have been included in Bateman’s list of Rutland, but for the fact that Launde Abbey lay just across the Leicestershire border.

The representative trustees also included Rt Hon Gerard J Noel, the Earl of Gainsborough’s second son, a Conservative MP and former government junior minister,³⁷ from Catmose Park, Oakham.³⁸ A number held office ex officio (i.e.

³⁴ See ch. 4 section 1.

³⁵ ‘Who was Who in Rutland’: *Rutland Record Society* No. 8 (1988).

³⁶ Jenkins, Andrew: *Rutland: A Portrait in Old Picture postcards* (1993).

³⁷ Stenton, Michael, (ed): *Who’s Who of British Members of Parliament* Vol. 1 1832-1885 (Hassocks,

unelected) – Gainsborough was a trustee by virtue of being the Lord Lieutenant of Rutland, and Fludyer through his chairmanship of the county quarter sessions.

Not all the trustees were landed gentry. In addition to the rector, the church was represented by the Bishop of Peterborough (Rt Revd William Conor Magee)³⁹, and the Dean (Very Revd Augustus Saunders). Oxford and Cambridge universities nominated one trustee each, and Thring and the masters two. It is no coincidence that the two staff nominees as trustees came from a quite different, business background. Both had sons at the school; both had been members of a parent group that had rallied to Thring's support against the Schools Inquiry Commissioners a decade earlier,⁴⁰ and both lived far away - in that part of the country which had the strongest concentration of pupils, the north-west. Thomas Birley from Pendleton, Manchester was a cloth manufacturer; Wensley Jacob from Birkenhead was a merchant and local JP. The clerk to the trustees was another local property owner (although only on a very small scale), JC Guy, the bank manager.⁴¹

The trustees had always been a group with strong local landed interests. Of the sixteen governors⁴² who held office during Thring's critical early years at the school, all lived within 25 miles of Uppingham, and 13 within Rutland. Six were local clergy, nine

1976). He was Conservative MP for Rutland 1847-83, Lord of the Treasury 1866-8, Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury 1868, Chief Commissioner of Public Buildings and Works 1876-80.

³⁸ Officially a Whig, although with distinctly conservative leanings: information from Lady Sarah Campden.

³⁹ Von Glehn, L: *Life and Letters of Mandell Creighton – by His Wife* (1904) Vol. II p. 3. His time at Peterborough is described as a 'vigorous administration (which) left the diocese in excellent order'.

⁴⁰ Parkin, GR, (ed): *Edward Thring, Headmaster of Uppingham School: Life, Diary and Letters* (1898) Vol. 1. p. 192

⁴¹ See also CN Wright's *Commercial and General Directory of Leicestershire and Rutland* (1880) p. 529.

⁴² This was their earlier title, before the New Scheme of 1869 reorganized the school's governance in the wake of the Endowed Schools' Act.

were squires 'living in large houses in the villages they mostly owned',⁴³ and one was both (like Thring's own father). Five had been High Sheriff; no fewer than nine of them were local magistrates.⁴⁴ Their average age in 1855 was just over 65.

It was with the passing of the Endowed Schools' Act in 1869 that they acquired the title of *trustees*, and their number grew.⁴⁵ They became an abler group overall, but little had changed in their dominant economic preoccupations – or their narrowness of outlook and vision. Even in the 1890s, Mandell Creighton, who was one of them himself as Bishop of Peterborough (and a far keener observer of local economic affairs than many bishops),⁴⁶ would admit to one of Thring's housemasters: 'There are several bad governing bodies in England, but none nearly so bad as ours'.⁴⁷

Thring had never enjoyed an easy relationship with them. They were the guarantors of the funds of the Archdeacon Johnson foundation, responsible not just for Uppingham but also for its sister school at Oakham. Thring believed that they were out of touch – 'mean-spirited consequential dignitaries'.⁴⁸

They were sensitive to criticism within the town that the school no longer catered for the aspiring poor of the local community, but was being handed over to the (new) rich

⁴³ Matthews, Bryan: *By God's Grace* (Maidstone, 1984) p. 87.

⁴⁴ Kelly's *Directory*: Adderley, Conant, Evans-Freke, Finch, Fludyer, Noel, Wales, Watson and Wingfield.

⁴⁵ UA: Trustees' Minute Book.

⁴⁶ Carnell, Geoffrey: *The Bishops of Peterborough 1541-1991* (Much Wenlock, 1993) p. 80: 'Creighton's Primary Charge (as bishop) showed his awareness of contemporary economic pressures and their human consequences'.

⁴⁷ Rawnsley, WF: *Edward Thring* (1926) p. 20. According to von Glehn: *Mandell Creighton* Vol. II p. 24, Creighton spoke at a church meeting in Leicester in 1891: 'The towns, as their streets grow, tell of the activity of the municipal body, of the care of sanitary inspectors. But it is left to the quickened conscience of the community at large to do what is needed to maintain the high spiritual interests, without which eternal things are vain and empty...'

⁴⁸ UA: Diary I p. 95.

– a concern mirrored in many a local dispute over the endowments of ancient grammar schools as the commissioners’ work drew attention to how their role had changed over the years.⁴⁹

Few of the trustees had specific academic leaning or experience. None had been educated at the school; very few had had sons there. They were baffled by Thring’s restless spirit, the sometimes petulant nature of his driven character and his relentless sense of purpose. In their dealings with him they reckoned him to be high-handed and unpredictable. In his early years he clashed particularly with Sir Gilbert Heathcote Bart, squire of Normanton in Rutland whom he described variously as a man of ‘sordid character...[who] showed his usual narrow bigotry’ in what he said at meetings: ‘a great conceited baby’; ‘a running sore in the body’, and ‘anything more ignorant I’ve never heard’.⁵⁰

They were men of conservative outlook and financial caution, with a strong vested interest in ensuring that prudent expenditure and modest rate levels remained the order of the day.⁵¹ A group of well-meaning and worthy local gentry, they found Thring’s ambitious plans hard to understand, and they were alarmed at their actual and potential expense. Thring’s ambition had already demanded spending beyond the levels at which they felt comfortable.⁵² Having once been responsible for a school of only a few dozen day pupils, and with funds only from the Archdeacon Johnson charity, they now found themselves in charge of a much larger, and much more financially complex, enterprise. However, the way in which they had allowed its

⁴⁹ Fletcher, Sheila: *Feminists and Bureaucrats* (Cambridge, 1980) p. 7. See also Balls, FE: ‘The Origins of the Endowed Schools Act 1869’ (Cambridge Ph.D. thesis, 1964) p. 448.

⁵⁰ Matthews: *By God’s Grace* pp. 86-87.

⁵¹ Rigby, Cormac: unpublished manuscript (n/d) ch. 11 p.1.

⁵² Matthews: *By God’s Grace* p. 87.

boarding side to develop meant that they now had little direct control over most of the school's income.⁵³

3) THE LEADING LOCAL FIGURE

With their chairman living some distance from Uppingham, one local trustee appears to have been highly influential - the figure who was also at the centre of this small town community and a leading guardian, rector William Wales. The parish church and its fine rectory were right in the heart of the town, the latter at No.2, London Road, where Wales lived in some style with his wife and sister-in-law together with six servants including a footman.⁵⁴

Wales was a man of private means who had married well.⁵⁵ Born in Bombay in 1804, his father was the first marine surveyor-general of India, but he died when Wales was only six years old. Mrs Wales and her five sons (of whom William was the eldest) returned to England, where she petitioned the admissions committee of Christ's Hospital School to accept William. He entered it in 1811, and spent the next six years there.⁵⁶

The particular nature of Christ's Hospital, which has a long and distinguished tradition of providing education for pupils who could not afford to go there without

⁵³ See ch.1 section 4.

⁵⁴ 1871 census: RG10/3301-2.

⁵⁵ His first wife died suddenly in 1855 aged 40. His second was the Hon. Miss Spencer of Great Houghton.

⁵⁶ Wales's great-uncle had worked at the school some years earlier. Wales was withdrawn in 1817, for reasons unknown, and eventually went up to St Catharine's Hall, Cambridge in 1823. I am indebted to his family descendant, Wendy Wales, for this information.

PAGE

NUMBERING

AS ORIGINAL

were 'not very successful'.⁶³ This battle may have been increased by the success of the congregational chapel.

Wales strongly disapproved of dissenters; local tradition has it that he was *Gulielmus* who worked very hard to undermine the rival, chapel Sunday school in this period, and who circulated a letter containing the words: 'Everybody must know, (and sorry I am to see it) that there are more and more persons daily dissenting from the church, and I conceive it a duty incumbent upon everyone to endeavour to put a stop to their career'.⁶⁴ It is likely that he regretted the fact that intemperance was on the increase in the town.

He had strong interests in the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK)⁶⁵ and in educational matters generally, and he was a keen supporter of a liberal education: 'Let it increasingly be felt that for a people to be uneducated is not only discreditable but disadvantageous'.⁶⁶ He was also chairman of a public meeting in Uppingham in the autumn of 1875 to discuss public concern about the impact of newly-arrived crowds of navvies in the area, working on the nearby new railway between Manton and Kettering. He enlisted Bishop Magee's support for a mission to them, and preached regularly at its services in the years which followed.⁶⁷

⁶³ NRO ML598: Episcopal Visitation 1878.

⁶⁴ Peach, Alfred: *A brief account of the Uppingham Congregational Church and of the Fifty Years' Ministry of Revd John Green* (Bournemouth, 1914).

⁶⁵ NCL: *Northampton District Chronicle* 21 August 1889.

⁶⁶ CUL: Wales, W: *A lecture delivered in the National School Room Northampton on Monday 6th May 1839, to the Members and Friends of the SPCK, Explaining the Nature and Objects of that Institution.*

⁶⁷ Paul, J. Ann: *3000 Strangers: Navy Life on the Kettering to Manton Railway* (Kettering, 2003) p. 72 and pp. 91-94. See also Barrett DW: *Life and Work Among the Navvies* (1880) p. 90.

In Uppingham, even though he sat on its governing body as a trustee, it is unlikely that he would have wholly approved of what Thring had done to the town's former country grammar school, by lessening the importance of its local roots and turning it into a high-fee boarding school with pupils drawn from far and wide.⁶⁸ This would hardly have been in line with the educational opportunities which Wales had enjoyed as a child at Christ's Hospital, despite his widowed mother's lack of money. It is also likely that he had been far from happy when Thring built the school chapel; it took the boys away from the parish church and established something of a rival Church of England establishment in the town – in visual terms as well as symbolic ones.⁶⁹

Wales had also done successful work over a 27-year period in his earlier (and more fashionable) living at All Saints, Northampton.⁷⁰ There he had set up a parochial school and shown a commitment to adult education, despite some territorial jealousies from the local National Society and the largely non-conformist Mechanics' Institute. He was a visionary and strong organiser: his Religious and Useful Knowledge Society had soon had a library of 2,500 volumes for newspapers and periodicals, and a small museum, and provided reading, writing and drawing classes as well as some lectures.⁷¹

He had had strong supporters there, but also vociferous enemies. There is some suggestion that he had moved to Uppingham after a period of ill-health – possibly

⁶⁸ See Bamford, TW: *Rise of the Public Schools: A Study of Boys' Public Boarding Schools in England and Wales from 1837 to the Present Day* (1967) pp. 198-201 for a discussion of this general trend.

⁶⁹ Rigby: unpublished manuscript ch. 11 p. 3.

⁷⁰ *Northampton Herald* 2 April 1859: he was there from 1832-59. See also Serjeantson, RJ: *A History of the Church of All Saints', Northampton* (1901).

⁷¹ Lawes, John: 'Voluntary Schools and Basic Education in Northampton 1800-1871' *Northamptonshire Past and Present* VI, 2 (1979-80) pp. 85-91 describes his educational work.

brought on by sustained opposition and controversy in Northampton,⁷² which had more than its share of free-thinkers and political radicals throughout the century, sometimes opposed to the controlling social forces of the clergy⁷³ - in part because of Wales' vigorous campaign to enforce pew rents and to collect the church rates.⁷⁴ His enemies drew cartoons of him and nicknamed him *Billy Wales, the black slug*.⁷⁵ He is unlikely to have been a champion of compromise – or someone with a highly developed sense of humour or mediation skills.

He was friendly with a number of Thring's clergymen staff - notably Hodgkinson⁷⁶ - yet he was waspish about their refusal (for lack of time) to take the extra Sunday service which he proposed to offer at the church in 1869, in an attempt to win back defectors from the dissenting chapels (of which he so strongly disapproved).⁷⁷ He pointed out that other schools had made this commitment in similar circumstances,⁷⁸ but some felt that he was too inclined to ask others to take these services for him – including one sardonic visitor to the school who remarked: 'Wales, like England, expects every man to do *his* duty'.⁷⁹

⁷² NCL: *Northampton Herald* 24 August 1879.

⁷³ Royle, Edward: 'Charles Bradlaugh, Free Thought and Northampton': *Northamptonshire Past and Present* VI. 3, (1979-80) pp. 141-150. See also Dickie, Marie: 'Liberals, Radicals and Socialists in Northamptonshire before the Great War': *Northamptonshire Past and Present* VII. 1, (1983-4) pp. 51-54.

⁷⁴ CUL: Letter to the Revd. W. Wales in Reply to that Gentleman's Sermon, by Thomas Milner MA. (Northampton, 1838).

⁷⁵ NCL: *Northampton Herald* 7 October 1916.

⁷⁶ Evident in the civilities with which they conducted their disagreement early in 1876 – see ch. 5 section 6.

⁷⁷ ULHSG: *Uppingham in 1802* p. 49; also ULHSG: *Uppingham in 1851*: pp. 46-48. There had been strong rivalry between the congregational/independent chapel and the parish church during much of the century.

⁷⁸ ROLLR DE 1784/24: Vestry Minute Book 1869.

⁷⁹ Rigby: manuscript ch. 11 p. 3. See also Rowe, BH: *Memory of TB Rowe*, Winckton papers.

A number of his sermons and writings have survived, confirming the impression of an imperious, distant and aloof, but godly man with a strong sense of public duty.

Typical is an address from his earlier ministry:

Remembering then that the one object of all our labours is the glory of God and the salvation of souls, let us warn, reprove, rebuke, exhort, let us plainly and fully make known the message, the mode and blessedness of that salvation which is in and by Jesus Christ.⁸⁰

With his keen sense of both propriety and status, his disapproval would have been oppressive and keenly felt. His secondary role as canon and chancellor of the Peterborough diocese (since 1850) suggests a tidy, legalistic mindset – a man who believed that forms and procedures in religion were important. He would not have been an easy man to deal with if crossed, or if he felt that his deeply-held principles were being challenged. His churchmanship and personality were in marked contrast to those of Thring. It would also be understandable if Thring (who had committed so much of his own fairly scant financial resources into his school) had not been at least a little envious of Wales' much greater wealth, both personal and institutional.⁸¹

4) THE UPPINGHAM UNION AND ITS CHAIRMAN

Thus late nineteenth century local government was still dominated by public spirited men of good intention, but rather less technical expertise. Uppingham's local affairs were dominated by property owners, farmers, shopkeepers and small-scale

⁸⁰ CUL: Wales, W: *The Minister's Duty towards Himself and His People: a Sermon preached at St Giles's Church, Northampton, at the Visitation of the Lord Bishop of Peterborough Wed. 6 August 1851.*

⁸¹ Point made by Peter Lane in correspondence, November 2005.

professional men – many of whose occupational backgrounds suggest Hamlin's *shopocracy* with rural variations.⁸² They certainly tended to be the principal ratepayers, and many were among the main employers.⁸³

The union comprised 35 parishes, 19 in Rutland, 10 others across the border in Leicestershire and 6 more in nearby parts of Northamptonshire.⁸⁴ Uppingham was much the largest of its constituent communities; it covered 82 square miles with a population of over 12,000 people. The total rateable value of the parish was £9,484/2/10d; the 35 parishes in the union as a whole were valued at £99,897.⁸⁵

The 25 guardians (each elected for a three-year renewable term) met each Wednesday in full session as the Poor Law union committee, but they were also members of a number of sub-committees – including one for sanitary matters. They oversaw a wide variety of local services costing between £3,000 and £4,000 annually. Their paid officials included a clerk - WH Brown, the same local solicitor who also acted for the rector over his rents and entry fines.⁸⁶ They also employed an overseer and collector of poor rates and taxes, an inspector of nuisances, a medical officer and public vaccinator, as well as a chaplain, workhouse master, matron and assistant, and a schoolmistress.⁸⁷ Their workhouse on the Leicester Road had been completed in 1837

⁸² See introduction, section 4.

⁸³ See Digby, Anne: 'The Poor Law, Charity and Self-Help', in Collins, EJT, (ed): *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, VII, 1850-1914 (Cambridge, 2000) p. 1437.

⁸⁴ Kelly's *Directory*: In Rutland: Ayston, Barrowden, Belton, Bisbrooke, Caldecott, Glaston, Lyddington, North Luffenham, South Luffenham, Morcott, Pilton, Preston, Ridlington, Seaton, Stoke Dry, Thorpe-by-Water, Uppingham, Wardley, Wing. In Leicestershire: Blaston St Giles/ Blaston St Michael, Bringham, Drayton, Easton Magna, Hallaton, Holt/Nevill Holt, Horninghold, Medbourne, Slawston, Stockerston. In Northamptonshire: Fineshade, Gretton, Harringworth, Laxton, Rockingham, Wakerley.

⁸⁵ Wright's *Directory*.

⁸⁶ See ch. 1 section 1.

⁸⁷ Kelly's *Directory* p. 527.

at a cost of £3,128, initially for 140 inmates but later extended to 170.⁸⁸ It had an imposing tower, a fine board room and apartments for the master.⁸⁹

Their sanitary sub-committee made decisions connected with the role of the guardians as the RSA; the sub-committee's records have failed to surface thus far, but the union minute book has survived.⁹⁰ This suggests that the guardians strove to carry out their increasing responsibilities (since the 1872 Public Health Act) carefully and conscientiously. The Registrar General's 1874 report focused on smallpox vaccinations throughout the country; of 365 children born in the Uppingham area, 327 had been successfully vaccinated, and 31 had died unvaccinated, leaving only seven unaccounted for – good compared with many of the other areas listed, and a feat repeated in both the following years.⁹¹

The local government taxation returns for 1874 show that the £2,300 raised in rates and loans was *already* way ahead of all but a handful of RSAs in the country.⁹² Of this, £1,866 was spent on sewer construction. The £2,000 loan which the RSA had taken out was one of the highest 15 or so in England and Wales by such a body (and it would take many years to pay off). The amount spent on lighting and watching rates by the Uppingham guardians seems well in line with other unions.⁹³ Most significantly, even if one allows for the fact that figures for a single year (as opposed to those averaged over a decade) may present a distorted picture, the extent to which

⁸⁸ ULHSG: *Uppingham in 1851* p. 32.

⁸⁹ Wright's *Directory*.

⁹⁰ ROLLR DE1381/441: Union Minute Book.

⁹¹ Annual Report of the Registrar General 1874.

⁹² See appendix 7.

⁹³ Parliamentary Papers 1873-4: 1875 LXII and subsequent years: Abstract of sums raised and expended by Rural Sanitary Authorities. Directly comparable figures for earlier years are not available, owing to local government reorganization following the 1872 Act.

RSA spending in Uppingham ran well ahead of its neighbours in the year 1874, both in real terms *and* relative to the respective size of each town and RSA, is impressive:-

94

Town	Uppingham	Oakham	Market Harborough	Melton Mowbray	Stamford
Total (£) contributions	2,300	304	425	452	603
Total (£) spending	2,351	172	444	275	271
Spending per inhabited house, 1871	5.36	0.28	0.88	0.27	0.19
Spending as % of rateable value, 1875	2.44	0.19	0.30	0.20	0.30

Their minute book shows that the guardians accounted scrupulously for workhouse expenditure.⁹⁵ They consulted the LGB in London, as they were legally bound to do, (through their clerk) on a wide range of issues. They set up new sub-committees promptly in response to changing national legislation. They had put pressure on the LGB to grant them the accelerated powers (bye-laws) which they believed they lacked, to enforce better building regulations and to organise sanitary improvements over several years before 1875 - and also to borrow money or raise rates to pay for them.⁹⁶

Whether this preoccupation with bye-laws (and their desire to become a USA) was necessary is debatable; there are suggestions in the LGB papers that it thought that

⁹⁴ 1871 census, and Accounts and papers: Local government taxation – Abstract of sums raised and expended by Rural Sanitary Authorities, and Parliamentary Local Taxation Returns 1874-1882

⁹⁵ Out-relief issues were monitored with particular care by the LGB in its early years, to see whether its directives were being implemented uniformly. See Hurren, Elizabeth T: “‘The Bury-al Board’: Poverty, Politics and Poor Relief in the Brixworth Union, Northamptonshire c 1870-1900” (Leicester Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 2000) p. 29.

⁹⁶ See ch. 4 section 1, and ch. 7 section 3.

they had quite enough powers already to do what was required. The wranglings over this issue took nearly five years after the passing of the Public Health Act of 1872 - until, in fact, the typhoid crisis threatened to overwhelm them. But given all the ambiguities over how the new Acts should be enforced, this is not surprising.

Potential conflicts of interest were made more complicated in Uppingham than in some small towns by the existence of the school. Guardians such as Evans-Freke and Wales had an interest in keeping costs down, but they were also trustees of the school with the duty to protect pupils' lives. The trustees had a responsibility to set fees which were not exorbitant, yet which allowed for essential health expenditure.

There was an additional dimension to any controversy about rates if the school demanded costly improvements: the extent to which (as a charity) it was exempt from some rate charges. Land which it owned fell into two categories. Portions (mostly endowed by Archdeacon Johnson in 1584) on which it had built classrooms and other educational buildings were exempt from rates – a source of further local resentment at a time when the school had moved beyond the reach of local parents. However, the boarding houses were liable for full rates, because housemasters ran them as commercial ventures, and two houses appeared high up in the list of assessed properties.⁹⁷ Thring cited the fact that 'we are large ratepayers' in justifying his sanitary demands.⁹⁸ If there were to be major expenses at any stage, the school would not escape completely.

⁹⁷ Rowe and Haslam, both of whom had boarding houses in High Street West.

⁹⁸ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 17: Thring to Rt Hon G Sclater Booth, President of the LGB, 5 Nov 1875.

The chairman of the guardians was Revd Barnard Smith, rector of the neighbouring village of Glaston, two miles to the East of Uppingham. He had joined the guardians a decade earlier, and became chairman after only one year: thus his experience stretched back well before the Public Health Acts of the 1870s, and he was on the sanitary sub-committee, as well as the union school education sub-committee and the nuisance sub-committee (of which he was also chairman). It seems likely that busy farmers and professional men were happy to leave much of the week- to-week affairs of the union to him (and to a lesser extent, to Wales, who had a much larger parish to oversee). The extent of his influence can be seen in the fact that he never missed one of the 87 meetings of the guardians in a three year period up to January 1877.

Although a clergyman like Thring (and Wales), whereas headmaster Thring was a classicist, Barnard Smith was primarily a mathematician. He had been admitted to Peterhouse, Cambridge (where his family had long connections) in 1835 and was a scholar in 1838; a year later he was 28th wrangler,⁹⁹ and a fellowship soon followed. By 1842 he was a priest, serving as dean of the college (1842-4) and as perpetual curate of Little St Mary's, before becoming college praelector and pro-proctor of the university (1860). He was the college's statutory classical lecturer from 1847 to 1855, but also successively junior and senior bursar (1840/41 and 1846/61 respectively) for an unusually long period. Thus his interest in mathematics was not purely academic and theoretical, and he appears to have been an innovator; his period of office coincided with the development both of the buildings and of the gardens of the college, and in selling land to (amongst others) the new Eastern Counties railway.

⁹⁹ His placing amongst those with first class honours in the mathematical tripos - not 4th, as stated in Longden, Revd. H: *Northampton and Rutland Clergy from 1850* Vol. XIV (Northampton, 1941) p. 207.

During his time the college built St Peter's terrace, re-roofed two sides of Old Court, installed new windows in the chapel, and laid a gas supply to the kitchen and to other parts of the college.¹⁰⁰ It also exchanged land with the university and with Pembroke College. But he had also had to deal in financial minutiae and day-to-day routine issues – including the renegotiation of payments for knife-cleaning. He was not without imagination, either; his textbook (written before he left Cambridge) *Arithmetic for Schools* includes problems which are original and inventive; it was a volume which sold well both at home and abroad.¹⁰¹ He also produced *Barnard Smith's Chart of the Metric System* (1871) and *Easy Lessons in Arithmetic* (1872).

He had accepted his plum living from the grateful fellows on marrying at a comparatively late age in 1861. It is significant that unlike Thring (but like Wales), he was a man of means, who gave £100 to the Peterhouse hall restoration fund in 1867, and restored Glaston church as well as building a fine nine-bedroomed rectory there – another building which would attract sizeable rates.¹⁰² Glaston was a parish of only 252 souls,¹⁰³ whose church and associated charities he ran meticulously and dutifully.¹⁰⁴ He became a member of the Rutland Deanery board, and was involved in the Rutland Society of Industry, which sought to keep families 'off the parish' through teaching children to knit and sew. He also showed an interest in public hygiene by raising money for drainage improvements to the main street (drawing no

¹⁰⁰ Pattenden, Philip and Thomson, Auriol: 'The Snuffing of Sanitary Smith: Fellow and Senior Bursar', *Peterhouse Annual Record* 2002-3 (Cambridge, 2005) pp. 43-56.

¹⁰¹ Thomson, Auriol: 'A Study of Roles and Relationships in a Rutland Village in the mid Victorian Period: Glaston c1860-90' (Leicester MA thesis in English Local History, 1999) p. 53.

¹⁰² *Mercury* 6 November 1863. The Rectory restoration alone cost £2,000. He also contributed to the restoration of Uppingham Church, in support of his ally, Wales. See also Pattenden and Thomson, 'Sanitary Smith' p. 48.

¹⁰³ 1871 census.

¹⁰⁴ Pattenden and Thomson: 'Sanitary Smith' p. 51. These included alms finances by tunnel money from land sold to the Midland Railway, a clothing club and a coal club.

doubt on his Peterhouse experience of building contracts).¹⁰⁵ He devised mathematical competitions and gave prizes for the local national and church schools.

A natural leader, his conscientiousness inspired great affection and loyalty in his supporters both in Glaston and in Uppingham. He had joined the board of guardians in 1863, and soon became its chairman (1866). In that role, he worked tirelessly, but after nine years he had become weary of the burden, and had to be persuaded early in 1875 to stay for the following year.¹⁰⁶

Conscious of his status and learning, he did not suffer fools gladly, and he was not a man to cross lightly. The laconic style of his textbooks¹⁰⁷ suggests that he was also rather too cerebral for an impassioned and sometimes histrionic romantic such as Thring. Barnard Smith had much more in common with Wales, both in terms of interests and of temperament. He wrote a pamphlet on the importance of correct procedures in matters of ecclesiastical dilapidations¹⁰⁸ (a subject in which Wales, with his diocesan legal role as chancellor, would surely have taken an interest). He appears to have had an eye for practical detail. Thring, with his big-picture mentality and flights of fancy would have tested the patience of anyone with a tidy, economical and logical mind-set. Neither Barnard Smith nor Wales had brought up children.¹⁰⁹

5) RATES, RATE REFORM AND THE PUBLIC HEALTH ACTS

¹⁰⁵ Thomson: 'Study' pp. 49-51.

¹⁰⁶ ROLLR DE1381/441: Union Minute Book 29 March 1876.

¹⁰⁷ For example, Smith, Barnard: *Arithmetic and Algebra in their Principles and Application* (Cambridge, 1853), which has no introduction, and only a minimum of commentary.

¹⁰⁸ Smith, Barnard: *Observations on the Ecclesiastical Dilapidations Act 1871 with a view to its amendment or more efficient operation* (Cambridge, 1872).

¹⁰⁹ This becomes relevant when one considers whether the criticisms of the school in chapter 5 were realistic – e.g. for its failure to restrict the movement of boarders once the epidemic broke out. See ch. 5 section 6.

The local rating system, on which the union depended for its income to promote sanitary reform, had been in existence since the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1601. The fact that rates were assessed almost entirely on the ownership or occupation of land and buildings¹¹⁰ caused resistance to the system from rural landlords in times of agricultural recession when it became harder to pass payment responsibility on to the tenant. Over the century to 1875 landowners had faced steep rises in both county and local poor rates.¹¹¹

While times had been good, it had not been a major issue – although agriculturalists had long feared that any end to protection would put rural prosperity at risk.¹¹² Even after the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846, their gloomy predictions came about only slowly, because farmers' profits increased, thanks to a long period of good harvests and general prosperity in agriculture for nearly thirty years, and greater productivity, made possible through more intensive farming methods and better land drainage, new fertilisers and improved equipment. Moreover the growing population had boosted demand, and there was little foreign competition. Railways now helped to transport produce to cities.¹¹³

But in the early 1870s there came a national agricultural recession.¹¹⁴ The precise nature of it was complex and must not be exaggerated,¹¹⁵ but contemporary belief in it

¹¹⁰ Daunton, MJ: *House and Home: Working Class Housing 1850-1914* (1983) pp. 203-6.

¹¹¹ Beckett, JV: *Aristocracy* pp. 199-200.

¹¹² Hoppen, K Theodore: *The Mid-Victorian Generation 1846-1886* (Oxford 1998) p. 10.

¹¹³ *Ibid* pp. 289-292: railway freight loaded increased from 88m tons in 1860 to 166m in 1870 and 232m in 1880.

¹¹⁴ Howkins, Alun: *Reshaping Rural England* (1991), especially p. 13 and pp. 138-139.

¹¹⁵ Howkins, Alun: 'Rural Society and Community: Overview', in Collins: *Agrarian History* pp. 1504-1505.

seems to have been real.¹¹⁶ It was a time for landowners to restrict their spending, both personal and institutional.¹¹⁷ One writer believes that:

Part of the depression in arable husbandry was psychological. Unease became foreboding because the traditional relationship between prices and output, between farmers and consumers, had broken down.¹¹⁸

The general gloom amongst farmers and country gentlemen had been exacerbated by the various Parochial Assessment Bills of 1860-2 (which proposed a much more rigorous rating system of valuations and enforcement) and the Union Chargeability Act of 1865.¹¹⁹ The latter required not only that all Unions provide a higher (and costlier) level of medical facilities in workhouses, but also required that rates be assessed in the same manner throughout each union, and thus forced wealthier parishes to assist poorer ones via a 'common fund'.¹²⁰ Wealthier parishes became very alarmed at the prospect of having to share the cost of relief given to others. Farmers and country gentlemen feared the growing costs of supporting relief (and proper public health provision) for the population of market towns such as

¹¹⁶ Although it varied between regions, it resulted in 'not just falling prices but also falling incomes, declining standards of living and declining welfare for sixty-five years on end'. For a fuller discussion, see Thompson, FML: 'An Anatomy of English Agriculture, 1870-1914', in Holderness, BA and Turner, M: *Land, Labour and Agriculture 1700-1920* (1991) pp. 211-240.

¹¹⁷ Hennock, EP: 'Finance and Politics in Urban Government in England', *Historical Journal* VI, 2, (1967) p. 216.

¹¹⁸ Holderness, BA: 'Agricultural Responses to the 'Depression' of the late Nineteenth Century in England and France: Towards a Comparative History'. Paper presented to IV Congresso di Storia dei Movimenti Contadini – L'Agricoltura en Europa e la masita della 'questione agrarian' 1880-1914 (Rome, 1993). See Collins: *Agrarian History* p. 1504.

¹¹⁹ See Englander, David: *Poverty and Poor Law Reform in Nineteenth Century Britain 1834-1914: from Chadwick to Booth* (1998) p. 21; Hurren: "'The Bury-al Board'" pp. 26-7; Digby, Anne: 'The Local State' in Collins: *Agrarian History*, VII, 1850-1914 p. 1438.

¹²⁰ 1865 28 and 29 Vict. C79.

Uppingham – and that this Act might be a prelude to the complete centralisation of all poor law costs and charges.¹²¹

The effects of a poor summer in 1873 were soon exacerbated by a very wet autumn in 1875. Together with the growing import of cheap foreign food from the vast prairie lands of the USA and Canada,¹²² this recession affected arable and cereal farmers very badly, especially in the south and east. Even farmers in those regions who had cut down cereal production and increased their livestock were not immune; there was livestock pneumonia and foot and mouth disease, sheep liver rot and swine fever. 1875 marked the start of a period of pressure on traditional home industries as the village population drifted into towns and factories. Bishop Creighton stated that few parts of England had suffered more severely than the diocese of Peterborough.¹²³

It meant declining rents and reduced rent returns for landlords:¹²⁴ there were demands for rent reduction and/or the handing-in of notice,¹²⁵ and the relationship between landlord and tenant became increasingly strained.¹²⁶ Moreover because rents were assessed on rental value of land and buildings, those whose main income came from rents - as opposed to profits or fees - were those on whom rates fell especially hard.¹²⁷ Uppingham had many of the former and fewer of the latter.

¹²¹ Webb, Sidney and Webb, Beatrice: *English Poor Law History Part II: The Last Hundred Years* Vol. I. (1929) pp. 429-430. See also Digby, Anne: 'The Poor Law, Charity and Self-Help' in Collins: *Agrarian History* p. 1438.

¹²² Hoppen: *Mid-Victorian Generation* p. 11: imported wheat constituted half of domestic consumption by 1873-5.

¹²³ Carnell, *Bishops of Peterborough* p. 80: this brought pastoral difficulties for clergy, as well as economic ones for farm workers and others.

¹²⁴ Hoppen: *Mid-Victorian Generation* p. 22.

¹²⁵ Howkins: *Reshaping Rural England* pp. 153-155.

¹²⁶ *Ibid* p. 157.

¹²⁷ Thompson, FML: 'Anatomy', in Holderness and Turner: *Land, Labour and Agriculture* p. 212.

Some belt-tightening applied further down the social scale too. There would have been reduced spending in local shops. Earnings of Rutland agricultural workers were close to the national average for English and Welsh counties in 1867-70, and remained so beyond the end of the century.¹²⁸ But the county felt the effects of the 1870s depression quicker than many:¹²⁹ it was one of three counties in which small-scale rural depopulation had begun by the time of the 1881 census,¹³⁰ and by 1911 its number of rural craftsmen would have declined by 11% compared with 1851.¹³¹ In nearby Stamford prices plummeted by 40% between 1875 and 1900, working hours were cut (and the birth rate dropped – possibly in part because workers tried to limit the size of their families).¹³²

The prosperity of many Uppingham traders was built on mortgages in the nineteenth century,¹³³ and many of these loans ran the borrower into trouble.¹³⁴ The majority of the loans were on property, and many were handed down from one generation to the next (and then added to or renegotiated, either to finance improvements or to raise capital for business ventures). Thus multiple mortgages were frequent; few were repaid in instalments, the majority of mortgage-holders paying off interest every year. Many of the lenders came from outside the town, with local solicitors such as guardian William Sheild acting as go-between.¹³⁵ Some traders over-reached themselves. Uppingham's prosperity in good times was precarious, founded on

¹²⁸ Figures from Hunt, EH: *Regional Wage Variations in Britain, 1850-1914* (Oxford 1973) p. 59.

¹²⁹ Thompson, 'Anatomy', in Holderness and Turner: *Labour and Agriculture* p. 222 and p. 230.

¹³⁰ Howkins: *Reshaping Rural England* p. 13. The others were Huntingdon and Cornwall.

¹³¹ Saville, J: *Rural Depopulation in England and Wales 1851-1951* (1957) pp. 73-74.

¹³² Smith, Martin: *The History of Stamford* (Stamford, 1994) p. 99.

¹³³ ULHSG: *Uppingham in 1802* p. 23.

¹³⁴ Rogers, Alan: 'Prosperous – But Precarious: Mortgages in the Local Economy of Uppingham in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries': *Family and Community History* 8/2 (Nov 2005) pp. 105-122.

¹³⁵ Ibid p. 116. There are suspicions of some sharp practice: solicitors arranged some mortgages to increase their local influence and hold over individuals.

borrowing which was now shown to have grown into unmanageable proportions. The shopkeepers and small businessmen feared that rate increases might be passed down to them (openly or surreptitiously) by landlords when rent reviews took place.

For all these reasons, the town authorities might well have feared a ratepayers' revolt if they launched into a bold and expensive programme of reform. The union's reluctance to fund sanitary reform was a good rural equivalent of this phenomenon; the town possessed few of the preconditions driving reform which affected some other communities. The population was rising but not dramatically. There had hitherto been no major epidemic of cholera or typhoid in Uppingham to throw up a campaigning figure such as William Farr,¹³⁶ or a popular demand for reform.¹³⁷ There had been no suggestion up to 1875 that central government might act to force improvements, or that government inspectors had significantly criticized its Authority.¹³⁸

There was also no equivalent to the civic pride (or financial resources) which impelled sanitary and water provision improvements in some Northern cities (e.g. Manchester). Nor was there much party-political activity except during election campaigns: Rutland had returned two MPs unopposed for over two decades, and for ten years its members had been Conservatives. There was no new industrial or commercial wealth to draw on (as in Birmingham). Its guardians possessed no sizeable corporate estate or similar traditional income, such as that enjoyed by some of the older municipal corporations.¹³⁹ There was no obvious rivalry with another

¹³⁶ Hardy, Anne: *Health and Medicine in Britain since 1860* (Basingstoke, 2001) p. 12. Farr noted the link between population density and high death-rates.

¹³⁷ Luckin, W: 'The final catastrophe – Cholera in London 1866' *Medical History* 21 (1977) p. 42.

¹³⁸ Hamlin: 'Muddling in Bumbledom' p 58. He lists this as a catalyst.

¹³⁹ Hennock: 'Finance and Politics' pp. 214 and 223.

local town. With little or no industry there was no economic imperative urgently to improve water supplies (as in Halifax) and no determined public health lobby.¹⁴⁰

There were political factors inhibiting reform too, notably a prevailing attitude amongst all classes that centralisation and interventionist legislation was foreign to the national spirit. Parliament preferred specific (i.e. local bye-law) to general legislation, and liked to devolve a good deal of power to the localities. The fundamental drive was still towards the elimination of abuses rather than to the creation of 'positive good'. Many of the acts were permissive rather than mandatory - even the Acts concerning education, public health, education and industrial regulation under the Conservatives during the 1870s. The various inspectorates developed only slowly,¹⁴¹ and there was a widespread suspicion of new officials such as MOHs. Thus much depended on the initiative of each local authority; as late as 1870 only four-fifths of all Poor Law unions had built workhouses, in response to legislation now more than 35 years old.¹⁴²

While there was a growing recognition after 1840 that action by municipalities rather than private entrepreneurs was the best way to promote sanitary reform, together with a stream of interventionist legislation designed to protect the individual (e.g. acts regulating emigration, mining and chemical pollution, vaccination, prisons and the police), reform outside the cities came only slowly. The Acts of 1848-66 which

¹⁴⁰ Goschl, KA: 'A comparative study of Public Health in Wakefield, Halifax and Doncaster 1865-1914' (Cambridge Ph.D. thesis, 1999) p. 66 and p. 82.

¹⁴¹ Lambert, Royston: *Sir John Simon 1816-1904 and English Social Administration* (1963) p. 510.

¹⁴² Hoppen: *Mid-Victorian Generation* pp. 108-109.

created Boards of Health removed many nuisances and improved local conditions had little effect beyond medium-sized towns.¹⁴³

In rural areas the economic, logistical and institutional demands remained formidable. The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 had created groupings of parishes to be the local authorities responsible for poor relief and sanitation.¹⁴⁴ For administrative convenience, market towns such as Uppingham had usually become the focal point of the union, with a group of local parishes joined to them.¹⁴⁵ It was personally convenient too; the JPs (now guardians ex-officio) could meet together and do business on market day. The rest of the Board was elected by means of voting papers submitted by qualified ratepayers, larger ratepayers having additional votes. Board members served for three years, with one-third elected annually.

Not all the officers appointed by guardians were effective, and nor was the supervision of regulations, accounts and new engineering works by Poor Law Commissioners always effective. In many areas amateurism and local autonomy were still the order of the day.¹⁴⁶ The Royal Commission of 1868-71 recognised that guardians had done little to put nuisance removal acts into force. There were nearly 700 different unions in urban and rural districts – together with an array of town councils and improvement commissions - struggling to implement reform, with little coordination between them¹⁴⁷ with tangled boundaries and rival officers levying

¹⁴³ Ibid p. 109.

¹⁴⁴ Smellie, KB: *A History of Local Government* (1946) p. 30.

¹⁴⁵ Rogers, Alan: *The Making of Uppingham as illustrated in its topography and buildings* (Uppingham, 2003) p. 25. Uppingham's orbit stretched from Ridlington in the North to Rockingham (South) and Duddington (East) to Slawston (West).

¹⁴⁶ Macdonagh, Oliver: *Early Victorian Government 1830-70* (1977) pp. 129-130.

¹⁴⁷ Lambert, Royston: 'The Local Government Act Office' *Victorian Studies* 6 No. 1 p. 502. For a full discussion, see Young, RKFJ: 'Sanitary Administration under the Local Government Board 1871-78' (Oxford B.Litt. thesis, 1964).

rates.¹⁴⁸ The separation of nuisance and sewer authorities was a particular problem.

Sir John Simon observed, with frustration:

In all country districts there is one authority for every privy and another authority for every pigsty, but I do also apprehend that with regard to the privy, one authority is expected to prevent its being a nuisance, and the other to require it to be put to rights if it is a nuisance...¹⁴⁹

Now depression had brought a new difficulty: rate levels began to cause significant protests. Rate income gathered by local authorities nationally had doubled in the thirty years up to 1871 and there were calls for more of the improvement costs to be borne by central taxation – a demand not confined to the Conservative back-benchers.¹⁵⁰

Successive governments introduced special grants as a means to lessen rate rises - but only gradually, fearing the political reaction both to increasing taxation and to increased centralization.¹⁵¹

6) THE CHANGES OF THE 1870s

By the early 1870s the public health measures introduced in cities and towns in 1848-66 to improve sanitation and water supply needed to be applied to the nation as a whole.¹⁵² Public interest had been caught in 1871 by the typhoid outbreak in Scarborough which caused the illness of the Prince of Wales and the death of Lord

¹⁴⁸ Smellie: *History* p. 5: e.g. Merthyr Tydfil 1869.

¹⁴⁹ Young: 'Sanitary Administration' pp. 6-7. It bears close resemblance to Uppingham situation: see ch. 1 section 2.

¹⁵⁰ Bellamy: *Central-Local Relations* pp. 33-4. See also Wohl: *Endangered Lives* pp. 171-173 for details of the 'economy' parties which sprang up in a number of towns and regions.

¹⁵¹ Early examples of such grants included financing of prosecutions and maintaining of prisoners, a 50% subsidy for the salaries of workhouse personnel, drugs and medical equipment, and a grant to pay half the cost of salaries for the new MOHs.

¹⁵² Hennock: 'Finance and Politics' p. 212.

Chesterfield.¹⁵³ In response to this rising concern, the *Lancet* began a special section on public health matters a year later.

The Sanitary Commission of 1871 paved the way for Gladstone's Public Health Act a year later. This divided England and Wales into districts under specific health authorities. In rural areas this meant the consolidation of all existing health responsibilities into one local RSA – made up of the existing board of guardians of each union, backed by a medical officer, an inspector of nuisances and supporting staff. But it did not lay down in detail what the duties of these Authorities were, and the RSAs themselves were still reluctant to finance major reforms. It fell to Disraeli to introduce the 1875 Act, which remained in force for sixty years. This set out in 343 sections a formidable list of requirements falling on boards of guardians with regard to their role as the sanitary authority on everything from nuisances, public health and infectious diseases to burials, offensive trades, food inspection and slaughterhouses. There would also now be much more onus on local authorities to ensure an adequate water supply, drainage and sewage disposal.¹⁵⁴

Stating the expectations of rural authorities was one thing, but ensuring that they were speedily implemented was quite another. The habit of relying on the locality to petition for the legal powers required by local bodies lingered on, with legislation that was merely optional; thus the initiative lay overwhelmingly with the locality.¹⁵⁵ These new Acts implied higher levels of competence to satisfy them and an increasing

¹⁵³ Hardy, Anne: *The Epidemic Streets: Infectious Diseases and the Rise of Preventive Medicine 1856-1900* (Oxford 1993) p. 168

¹⁵⁴ By the end of the decade, there would also be regulation of markets, street lighting and burials, and it would be compulsory to notify infectious diseases.

¹⁵⁵ Hennock: 'Finance and Politics' p. 214.

bureaucracy to monitor local progress.¹⁵⁶ The ratepayers were still hostile to the costs: even if a RSA had the will and initiative for improvements, it would often have to spread the cost over a number of years (an issue on which it was given little guidance).

Despite their sense of public responsibility or their social aspirations, those taking on the voluntary and unpaid work of a guardian often had little or no technical expertise in the issues which they would face; some would also have been daunted by the growing scale of the financial questions they had to deal with. Their workload (and the number of meetings they had to attend) had increased by virtue of their new combined poor law and sanitary responsibilities – which also increased their difficulties in being objective about the range of problems they had to solve. Poor Law civil servants encouraged guardians to think of themselves as experts,¹⁵⁷ yet many of them greatly feared making a legal or technical mistake.¹⁵⁸ This was a period when those officials were also conducting a retrenchment ‘crusade’ ethos in poor law spending, so it was predictable that many guardians would decide to extend this mentality into issues of public health and sanitation.¹⁵⁹

They relied heavily on their paid officials. They frequently received conflicting advice from within their own membership, lawyers, surveyors and contractors about methods, equipment and rights of way,¹⁶⁰ and they often hesitated to pay for outside

¹⁵⁶ Smellie: *History* p. 62.

¹⁵⁷ Hurren, Elizabeth T: “Poor Law versus Public Health: Diphtheria, Sanitary Reform and the ‘Crusade’ against Outdoor Relief 1870-1900” *Social History of Medicine* 18 No. 1 (2005) pp. 403-404.

¹⁵⁸ Hamlin: ‘Bumbledom’ p. 67.

¹⁵⁹ Hurren: ‘Poor Law’ pp. 401-402.

¹⁶⁰ Kerr, Barbara: ‘Country Professions’, in Mingay, GE: *The Victorian Countryside* (1981) Vol. p. 294.

expertise. Clergymen and doctors often took the lead, men of authority but not always of detailed knowledge. Their prolonged arguments often delayed urgent matters.¹⁶¹ Even if they *were* able to commission improvements, there was no guarantee that these would have the desired effect.¹⁶² As late as 1900 a speaker at the Central Poor Law conference lamented that guardians returned home ‘with a depressing sense of the impossibility of carrying out the different, admirable reforms they have heard so ably advocated’.¹⁶³

There were more opportunities for RSAs to borrow money, and a number did so. The 1872 Act encouraged them to take out loans either from private organisations or from the PWLB in London. As a result this period saw very substantial increases in loans for public works.¹⁶⁴ The Local Loans Act (also 1875) gave authorities the power to issue debentures and annuities certificates to raise loans under Board supervision.

With more loans came investigation and inspection, which showed inadequacies and defects, discovered after 1871, at least, by the new LGB’s own sanitary engineers.¹⁶⁵ By the late 1870s the LGB had built up considerable experience in all matters relating to sanitary engineering, and bewildered local authorities such as those in Uppingham could turn to it for advice on sewage removal, the construction of sewers, outfall

¹⁶¹ Ibid p. 288.

¹⁶² e.g. events in Croydon in 1852-3. See Cambridge, NA: ‘The Life and Times of Dr Alfred Carpenter 1825-1892’ (London Univ. D. Med thesis, 2002) pp. 57-58.

¹⁶³ Poor Law Conference Reports 1890, 1891, p 236. See Mingay: *The Victorian Countryside* (1981) Vol. 2 p. 600.

¹⁶⁴ Wohl, Anthony S: *Endangered Lives* (1983) pp. 112-6. Over the period 1848-1872 local authorities had borrowed only £11m from central government for sanitary purposes: by contrast, between 1872 and 1880 loans were sanctioned totalling over £22m - a figure which rose to £66m between 1880 and 1897. A LGB survey showed that local authorities had contracted for over £3.5m worth of work by 1874, of which £2.5m was for sanitation and water supply.

¹⁶⁵ PRO/TNA MH19/88 15 April 1876. Inspectors tended to work regionally, and to be involved in 5 to 6 inspections at any one time. Major Tulloch, who came to Uppingham in July 1876, was one such. See ch. 7 section 4.

works, and processing plants.¹⁶⁶ Even then, 27,000 different organisations and authorities of various types, all dealt with separate matters in small areas and were answerable to the LGB.¹⁶⁷ Determined central government initiative was needed to direct them.

7) THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD

It was one thing to enact new sanitary law, but quite another to ensure that it was well implemented at the local level, especially in times of economic stringency. The Local Government Act of 1871 set up the LGB to exercise general supervision over local government affairs.¹⁶⁸ This Board combined the powers of the former Central Board of Health and the Poor Law Board, as well as some responsibilities which had previously lain with the Home Office or the Privy Council. Both town and school would repeatedly demand the attention of the LGB's most senior officials during the 1875-6 epidemic, and its internal tensions reduced its effectiveness to respond.

While it was more powerful than its predecessor organisations insofar as its president was a member of the cabinet,¹⁶⁹ the LGB was burdened from the outset with a huge range of responsibilities in overseeing the local execution of central government's policies - in public health, disease, prevention, housing, registration of births, marriages and deaths, and local taxation returns.¹⁷⁰ If a uniform and efficient

¹⁶⁶ See TNA MH19/88, for the list for Jan/Feb 1876, and also Ensor, RCK: *England 1870-1914* (Oxford, 1959) p. 442.

¹⁶⁷ Redlich, J and Hirst, F: *The History of Local Government in England* (1958) pp. 110. The process was haphazard; only with the Local Government Act of 1888 (which set up county councils), would the government have provided a sufficiently sophisticated local structure capable of coping with all these new demands.

¹⁶⁸ Macdonagh: *Early Victorian Government* p. 130. See also Bellamy, Christine: *Central-Local Relations* pp. 111-165.

¹⁶⁹ Hurren: 'The Burial Board' p. 28.

¹⁷⁰ TNA MH25/26-8 boxes give a good picture. A year later the powers of the Board of Trade and of the Home Secretary under the Highways and Turnpikes Act were transferred to the LGB too.

environmental health system was to be established, it would be essential for central government to provide expertise and experience.¹⁷¹ Within months of its inception came the first Public Health Act, thus further increasing the LGB's workload.¹⁷² For a number of years it struggled to define the precise balance between setting uniform national standards and allowing (or even requiring) some very demanding local authorities to make their own decisions.¹⁷³

The LGB suffered from institutional tensions. At a personal level these were between Sir John Simon and John Lambert (the Board's secretary). Simon regretted that he had to work to its senior administrators rather than direct to the president himself. He believed that his role had been downgraded, while his rival (Lambert) had the ear of successive presidents - James Stansfeld until 1874 and George Sclater Booth thereafter.

Lambert mastered vast amounts of administrative detail and his influence could be felt everywhere: '[his] small, neat handwriting is amazingly ubiquitous, remorselessly omnipresent',¹⁷⁴ – as evidenced on the papers relating to Uppingham. He respected Simon and the medical officials, but he had a firm view of their proper place in this new order of things: they should be essentially subordinate to the lay secretariat, peripheral and consultative, without powers of initiation or decision, existing mainly

¹⁷¹ Lambert, Royston: 'The Local Government Act Office' *Journal of Victorian Studies* (1962) pp. 122-150.

¹⁷² Maltbie, MR: 'The Local Government Board' *Political Science Quarterly* Vol. XIII No. 2 (1903) p. 236.

¹⁷³ TNA MH25/27: e.g. its ruling on 21/4/76 that guardians should not be required to make separate provision for Jewish paupers.

¹⁷⁴ Lambert: *Simon* p. 533 and pp. 524-526.

to provide advice when asked for it".¹⁷⁵ Thus the technical expert became subordinate to the generalist administrator.¹⁷⁶

There were differences over policy too. The fusion of the former Poor Law Board and the Medical Department of the Privy Council brought together two organisations with very different traditions and expectations. The zealous employees of the Medical Department, headed by Sir John Simon, wished to create a cadre of central expertise in medical and sanitary engineering matters, and to force the pace of reform by imposing on local authorities a thorough system of central government inspection. By contrast, notwithstanding the powers given to the Board under the 1866 Sanitary Act to force local authorities to carry out sewerage and water supply works, Lambert and the former Poor Law Board personnel were happier in persuading (rather than compelling) local authorities to institute reform. They were reluctant to cede too much power to medical expertise.¹⁷⁷ Stansfeld felt that it did not need a host of medical men to improve the nation's cleanliness and purity.

Lambert and his allies were keen to win the confidence of the RSAs. They preferred to persuade them to employ their own professional consultants: it would reassure them that their independence was not being eroded. Moreover the key criterion for any inspector appointed by the Board should be not that he was an expert, but that he was a gentleman.¹⁷⁸ Personal influence and good judgement would count; despite his areas of comparative ignorance he should be able to assess developments and the quality of local officers and those whose services the RSAs hired in. At the local level

¹⁷⁵ Ibid p. 526.

¹⁷⁶ Bellamy: *Central-Local Relations* p. 15. There appear to be parallels with the modern N.H.S.

¹⁷⁷ Frazer, WM: *A History of Public Health 1834-1939* (1950) p. 118. See also Simon, Sir John: *English Sanitary Institutions* (1897) pp. 364-365.

¹⁷⁸ Bellamy: *Central-Local Relations* p. 116.

transfers of officials between districts were rare, thus reinforcing a cosy conservatism. The LGB would, however, retain a number of experts in various fields for use in more contentious or difficult cases.

Thus the first generation of inspectors who monitored the performance of RSAs across the country for the LGB tended to come from the minor branches of landed political families or from the gentry. Many held office for decades, and often oversaw only one or two districts.¹⁷⁹ They continued to persuade rather than to instruct wherever possible. Significantly for Uppingham, this approach was championed by Robert Rawlinson, the Board's chief engineering inspector, who would play a part in Uppingham's events to come: 'My whole life's experience goes to this, that you cannot compel unwilling men... you cannot put intelligence into an unwilling community'.¹⁸⁰ It was this reluctance to take powers of enforcement which eventually forced Simon into retirement in 1876.

The LGB suffered from other handicaps. Its work was not especially exciting or rewarding. The scope for its officials to take decisions and to see them through was thwarted by formidable bureaucracy at the very cautious and conservative senior levels. Some of the more talented personnel found this highly frustrating.¹⁸¹ Pay and prospects of promotion were poor.¹⁸² Leadership was also mediocre in this period.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid p. 145.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid p.117: *First Report: Evidence of Robert Rawlinson*. See also Young: *Sanitary Administration* pp. 211-3. Rawlinson had long experience of the local authorities – including their tendency to cut costs on major projects, sometimes with disastrous results. See Binnie GM: *Early Victorian Water Engineers* (1981) pp. 202-222 for his involvement in the problems of the Swansea Corporation Waterworks.

¹⁸¹ Ross, William A: 'The Local Government Board and After: Retrospect' *Public Administration* Vol. 13 (1956) p. 18.

¹⁸² Macleod, Roy M: 'Treasury Control and Social Administration: A Study of Establishment Growth at the Local Government Board 1871-1905' *Occasional papers on Social Administration* No.23 (1968) p. 15.

Sclater Booth,¹⁸³ was described as ‘an honest and capable man of business’ in his obituary in the *Times*: ‘He had more sense than genius...his parliamentary life may be said to have been useful rather than ambitious, solid rather than distinguished’¹⁸⁴

Furthermore, with over 700 local authorities to supervise, the LGB was chronically overworked. It sometimes took its officials twelve months to answer a letter.¹⁸⁵ Not surprisingly, it tended to become bureaucratic and legalistic.¹⁸⁶ Overwhelmed as it was by local demands, it had insufficient time fully to provide information for central policy development.¹⁸⁷ It soon acquired a reputation for procrastination and inertia.¹⁸⁸

Treasury control was also increasingly strict, in an attempt to keep spending under control and to minimise waste.¹⁸⁹ Poor Law retrenchment policy, dubbed by contemporaries as a ‘crusade’ against outdoor relief, dominated LGB spending policies after 1871 until 1900.¹⁹⁰ New policy guidelines stated that civil servants needed to save money and so the medical department was criticised for requiring higher budgets. Requests for more or better-paid staff met with a generally negative response.¹⁹¹

¹⁸³ George Sclater Booth PC LLD FRS, Lord Basing. President of the LGB 1874, later chairman of the first County Council of Hampshire 1888.

¹⁸⁴ *Times*, 23 October 1894.

¹⁸⁵ Haw, George: ‘The Local Government Board’ *Contemporary Review* (1908) p. 55. In the last year of the old Board (1870), 58,000 letters were received, but by 1874 the various RSAs sent not less than 84,000 to its successor, and by 1895 the figure had risen to 160,000. See also Macleod: *Treasury Control* p. 11 and p. 33.

¹⁸⁶ Bellamy: *Central-Local Relations* p. 139.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid* p. 14.

¹⁸⁸ Macleod: *Treasury Control* p. 8. See also Bellamy: *Central-Local Relations* pp. 111-112.

¹⁸⁹ Macleod: *Treasury Control* p. 52.

¹⁹⁰ Hurren: ‘Poor Law’ p. 399.

¹⁹¹ Sutherland, Gillian: *Studies in the Growth of Nineteenth Century Government*: (1972) p. 216.

When the number of loan applications began to rise, although public health reformers and local ratepayers both agreed that there was a strong case for easier and cheaper public borrowing, the Treasury continued to regard them as hidden grants. In January 1873 it imposed a limit of thirty years on the repayment of sanitary loans at 3.5% interest; by 1875 it was proposing to make the minimum interest rate 5% in all but the most urgent cases.¹⁹²

Under the Local Loans Act (1875) parliament set a limit of £4m per annum on such loans. A typical PWLB loan to an RSA (depending on its size of population) was up to £10,000; ten to twenty loans were made each month in 1876-7, still mostly at an interest rate of 3.5% payable over thirty years – although as a result of Treasury pressure, 4% or higher was charged in some cases.¹⁹³ As a result, when seeking loans for improvements, many RSAs preferred to raise money commercially rather than borrow from LGB; they got better financial arrangements and a greater degree of independence that way.

This method also made them less likely to suffer from bureaucratic delay. Before the LGB would recommend a loan to the Commissioners, its own sanitary engineers had to come from London to carry out a local investigation. This often revealed other needs and problems which the local authority needed to undertake – at more expense, and often only after extensive consultation.¹⁹⁴ The Public Works Loan Act of 1875 had imposed on the LGB the obligation to ensure that work was actually carried out

¹⁹² Bellamy: *Central-Local Relations* p. 82 and p. 85.

¹⁹³ TNA MH19/190: 2nd Annual Report of the PWLB 20 June 1877. Much larger loans were made to major cities such as Manchester.

¹⁹⁴ See ch. 7 section 4.

on each project – inspecting before the project and overseeing after it. This too increased its workload.¹⁹⁵

The LGB was caught between the desire of both the politicians and the public for sanitary reform, and their distrust of increased government centralisation and its cost. In these early years of its existence it also had to give advice on a huge range of minor matters to RSAs still uncertain about their precise responsibilities and powers of decision-making. The writers of *An Outline of Local Government and Local Taxation in England and Wales* (written in 1884), concluded: ‘The defectiveness of local government overwhelms the LGB’.¹⁹⁶ The LGB’s experience of Uppingham’s minutiae, and Uppingham’s experience of its delays, suggest that this was indeed the case.

8) CONCLUSION

Thus by 1875 both town and school affairs in Uppingham were the responsibility of influential men who had personal interests in containing rate increases, even if sanitary reform was needed within a growing community. Both the guardians and the trustees were men with little in common with the school’s headmaster. The new agricultural recession heightened their caution – an attitude of mind already prevalent within a group of guardians, who were facing substantial new demands which exceeded both the time that could give to them and their own technical expertise. The rating system hampered reform at the local level, and the structure, internal tensions and workload of the LGB militated against decisive action to prevent, contain or solve a sanitary crisis.

¹⁹⁵ Bellamy: *Central-Local Relations* p. 14.

¹⁹⁶ Wright, RS, and Hobhouse, Henry: *An Outline of Local Government and Local Taxation in England and Wales* (1884) intro. p viii.

CHAPTER 3 – SANITATION, WATER SUPPLY, GPs and MOHs.

This chapter firstly seeks to explore the levels of medical care, sanitation and water supply in Uppingham in 1875, comparing them with some other communities in the area. The second part traces the development and nature at that time of the roles of the country GPs and the MOHs, and details the personalities and previous careers of the two leading medical figures in the events to come - the school doctor and local GP, Thomas Bell, and the MOH, Alfred Haviland. They would become bitter combatants.

The contemporary state of knowledge about typhoid, and the incidence of epidemics generally in boarding schools are explained in appendix 4.

1) RURAL SANITATION

Like Uppingham itself, sanitary provision in rural Britain had changed comparatively little over the years by the late nineteenth century:

Britain had managed its sanitary arrangements quite well for a number of centuries, drawing water from relatively unpolluted sources, disposing of waste without difficulty. The village drew water from wells and streams, distributed excreta over the fields. Prolonged drought caused a shortage of water and a stink. 'Fever', never entirely absent from the rural community, erupted into local epidemics. Infant mortality would rise and the medical man (would) talk wisely of 'summer diarrhoea' or 'infantile cholera'. When the rain came, as it always did, the water level of surface wells rose quickly, dried ordure leached into the soil, and the village reverted to its normal

condition of too wet rather than too dry. It had worked for centuries without producing unbearable conditions and persisted in remoter country districts until almost the present day...¹

The nineteenth century population increase put an unprecedented strain on these arrangements. By 1850 the population of England and Wales had virtually doubled in five decades, and in many cities it had quadrupled or more. It was densely packed into low quality, low-cost housing with few planning controls, thus making disease an increasing threat. In the second half of the century water closets gained in awareness and popularity, after the organizers of the Great Exhibition provided public lavatories. London generally had water closets by 1870,² although the supporters of dry earth and water closets would argue about their respective merits for some years. But London represented a very different world from Uppingham.

In rural areas there were fewer pressures from industrialisation, but health hazards were just as real. House sanitary arrangements were primitive; people often used holes in the ground at the back of the cottage, or relieved themselves in alleyways or in fields with streams. Livestock grazed and wandered at will, leaving the inevitable evidence of their presence. Uppingham had seen a large incidence of the in-filling of back yards with small properties during the century; parts of the town had been densely rebuilt,³ and many people lived in the buildings in which they worked – a

¹ Cartwright, FF: *A Social History of Medicine* (1977) p. 93.

² Hardy, Anne: *Epidemic Streets: Infectious Disease and the Rise of Preventive Medicine 1856-1900* (1993) p. 161.

³ See ch. 2 section 2.

hazardous situation in health terms.⁴ It is likely that parts of the town were similar to Seacroft, West Yorkshire in 1865:

None of the villages have any drains whatever. It is the practice to throw everything in the shape of sewage, garbage, refuse, and even solid excrement into the highway, onto the green and the adjacent midden [waste] heaps. And into a ditch if such be handy... Almost every cottage has in front of it a midden-heap...⁵

Sir John Simon drew attention to the dangers in his report to the Privy Council a year earlier (1864), and complained that local authorities were doing little or nothing to remove them.⁶ House waste and excrement were often placed in simple pits, into which were thrown additions of soil or ash to cover the contents, turning it into a more or less solid mass. Residents often threw in slops or other domestic refuse too. Gradually large buckets or closets were introduced which held sizeable quantities of sewage. Originally pervious, newer types of closet were developed through which waste material would not leak. Medical authorities called repeatedly for pail closets to be created inside houses, using either ash or water. By the end of the century there would be clear evidence that pails (as opposed to privies) reduced the incidence of typhoid,⁷ but even where RSAs made it a high priority to speed up improvement, bye-laws to force residents to conform were often inadequate.

⁴ Uppingham Local History Studies Group: *Uppingham in 1802: A Year to Remember?* (Uppingham 2002) p. 31.

⁵ Wohl, Anthony S: *Endangered Lives* (1983) p. 91: Annual Report of the Medical Officer to the Privy Council) for 1864. Appendix IV, p. 509: 'Sanitary State of Seacroft, by Dr Stevens'.

⁶ Ibid pp. 91-2.

⁷ Dauntton, MJ: *House and Home in the Victorian City* (1983) pp. 244-5: Annual Report of the MOH for Nottingham. 1897 p. 39.

Where cesspits existed, they needed significant amounts of water to drive the waste from house or privy to pit. This was hard to achieve since, where no piped water was provided, water had to be manually drawn from wells. Drainage gradients needed to be generous, if the pits were to be efficient and to prevent the build-up or rushing-back of waste when systems were full, especially where drains were shared between houses. They needed to be free from leakage – and sited a careful distance from the house if cellars were not to become flooded. Cesspits, like the privies and closets, needed careful and regular emptying by the scavenger or night-soil man to well-chosen sites (if the householder did not bury it himself in the garden). Pits were often left to overflow until the local farmer wanted, or was ready to collect, the waste. Above all, drains from houses, cesspits which might leak, and sewers across towns and cities, needed to avoid watercourses and wells, if river pollution and cross-contamination were to be avoided.⁸

Such problems were resolved only slowly; sewer commissions were ancient institutions, but they existed mainly to deal with surface water, and there was no legislation before 1835 to compel house drainage into public sewers, even in cities. By 1870 cesspools were disappearing in towns, but in the countryside many still failed to treat sewage before it disappeared into the ground, often near watercourses.⁹ Animals continue to graze undisturbed.¹⁰ The cost of regular checking and cleaning of cesspits by the local authority was often deemed prohibitive.

⁸ Halliday, Stephen: *The Great Stink of London: Sir Joseph Bazalgette & The Cleansing of the Victorian Capital* (Stroud, 2001) p. 42.

⁹ Barty-King, H: *An Illustrated History of Water Supply and Wastewater in the United Kingdom* (1992) p. 107.

¹⁰ Wohl, Anthony S: *Endangered Lives* (1983) p. 110.

Ultimately, every system needed somewhere for the wastes to be stored or disposed of. There was too much scope for spillage, and for waste to be left on floors and in corners as it was dug out. Solid waste systems needed emptying manually – usually to large mounds on the edge of the town or village. These sewage piles were sometimes carelessly sited - too near to wells and springs, or in places where humans would tend to pick them over and animals to graze or roam on them.

Uppingham appears to have been no worse than its neighbours in respect of its sanitation, and possibly better.¹¹ The East Midlands was not in the forefront of sanitary reform. Leicester (only 20 miles away) relied until 1850 on cesspits, and even as late as 1875 only parts of a sewerage system were in place there: much of the waste still discharged into the river. A pail closet and emptying system had recently been started,¹² but privies were still widespread - a system notoriously prone to typhoid, according to contemporary reports from MOHs in Nottingham and other cities.¹³

The comparison with another neighbour, Oakham, is instructive. In the county town there had been bitter complaints from residents in 1856 that drains could not cope with demand from the new water closets, and that those using the latter would have to revert to cesspool drainage. Unfavourable comparisons were made with Uppingham, which was said to have spent many thousands of pounds on improvements.¹⁴

Twelve years later a civil engineer reported that he found the sewers in Oakham to be:

¹¹ See ch.1 section 2.

¹² Simmons, Jack: *Life in Victorian Leicester* (Leicester, 1971) pp. 12-14.

¹³ Daunton: *House and Home* p. 254.

¹⁴ Traylen, T: *Oakham in Rutland* (Stamford 1982) p. 17.

generally of a most primitive construction (with) rubble stone side walls with slab bottoms and covers... neither the material of construction nor of subsoil can be water tight, and from their superficial nature (they) must always be liable to pollute the water in the surrounding wells.

He recommended larger diameter pipes at greater depth, but (possibly fearing that an expensive scheme would be rejected out of hand) his suggestions were modest: the estimated cost was only £600¹⁵ – significantly less than Uppingham had recently spent.¹⁶ Unsurprisingly, three years later (1871) the local paper again reported ‘an abominable stench’ near the market place as cholera loomed in the area, resulting in a slightly more ambitious second scheme (£700);¹⁷ deep sewerage had to wait until 1878 when the town once again followed in Uppingham’s wake.¹⁸

2) WATER SUPPLIES NATIONALLY

In the early nineteenth century there were few municipal water facilities, and a growing problem. Liverpool had supplies barely sufficient for cooking and drinking.¹⁹ London and Bristol fared better; they had more wells, but these were very liable to cesspool soakage – and as water-closet usage grew, an increased risk of cross-infection.²⁰

Urban expansion led to increased demand, and simultaneously to the destruction or pollution of many traditional sources, as slaughterhouses and bleach-works appeared

¹⁵ *Mercury* June 1868: Mr ES Stephens, CE - see also Traylen: *Oakham* p. 18.

¹⁶ See ch. 4 section 1.

¹⁷ Traylen: *Oakham* p. 19.

¹⁸ *Ibid* p. 97.

¹⁹ Hassan, John: *A History of Water in Modern England and Wales* (Manchester, 1999) p. 11.

²⁰ *Ibid* p. 25.

on riverbanks, and building activity obliterated or infected springs. Cholera and typhoid became more frequent. There were increased demands for (and expectations of) regular washing and bathing – and for better water supplies.

As technological developments made for better and larger reservoirs and the filtering of water, cities varied in their level of uptake. By 1879, 79.4% of Manchester houses had an internal supply.²¹ However there were 43,000 houses in Birmingham without one as late as 1913.²² Piping did not solve all problems: the sporadic water supply, its cost to consumers and the limited sewer networks restricted the rate at which water closets spread into upper and middle class households.²³ Even though plumbing became more professional,²⁴ there were still many sources of impurity: some houses stored water in wooden butts which had been wine or beer casks. Some butts were poorly covered, or stood in warm kitchens. Until cast-iron pipes were introduced to replace those made out of wood and lead, pipe joints tended to be suspect.

The poor fared worst. Many homes in the years up to 1900 still relied on street standpipes,²⁵ with closets flushed through the use of the hand-pail: there were serious bacteriological and health risks. Not until 1914 did most urban areas have piped supplies – by which time politicians and others had become convinced of need for municipal management, and were looking to undertake ambitious schemes from further afield. Manchester, Liverpool and Glasgow had all begun to pipe in water from natural sources well beyond their confines. But regional co-operation between

²¹ Hassan: *History* p. 11.

²² Reynolds, R: *Cleanliness and Godliness: Or the Further Metamorphosis* (1943) p. 99

²³ Hassan: *History* p. 19.

²⁴ Hardy: *Epidemic Streets* pp. 169-172.

²⁵ Hassan: *History* p. 11.

suppliers was rare.²⁶ Towns depended upon a combination of common watering-places, private and public wells, ponds, reservoirs, streams, rivers and springs, and rain water – with local government exercising overall responsibility for safeguarding supplies.²⁷

Until the 1800s most man-made water provision outside London was carried out by town authorities. The nineteenth century saw a gradual shift towards private schemes before the final years brought the municipalities back again into the field, sometimes expensively buying out the established companies.²⁸ Parliament tried to prevent both monopoly abuse and inter-company rivalries, but it recognised that while entrepreneurs (who included some MPs²⁹) tended to act for short-term gain, they could get things done quickly at a time when borrowing facilities for municipal authorities were very limited.

However the doubts which grew about the inadequacy of private waterworks, resulted in a resurgence of municipal activity, because it was believed that ‘water was the key to the public health problem’.³⁰ This led to legislation in the 1840s: town authorities were permitted (if the company agreed), to take over private undertakings,³¹ although the cost of private bills acted as a deterrent. By 1871 only one-third of all the urban sanitary authorities owned, or were developing, their own water supply – either themselves or through privately owned third parties. Only with the Public Health

²⁶ Ibid p. 41.

²⁷ Hassan, John : ‘The Growth and Impact of the British Water Industry in the Nineteenth Century’, *Economic History Review* 38 (1985): p 532.

²⁸ Robins, FW: *The Story of Water Supply* (Oxford, 1946) p. 195.

²⁹ Hassan: ‘Growth and Impact’ p. 533. See also WM Stern: ‘Water Supply in Britain: The Development of a Public Service’ *Royal Sanitary Institute Journal* LXXIV (1954) p. 999.

³⁰ Hassan: ‘Growth and Impact’ p. 543.

³¹ Ibid pp. 537-538.

(Water) Act of 1878 was an easier legislative path provided for the municipal purchase of private water works.³²

Rural communities were expensive to supply with water, and had limited funds with which to pay for installation.³³ The 1872 Public Health Act obliged both urban and rural sanitary authorities to provide a supply, but in many cases it was a very rudimentary one. Many homes had only one tap³⁴ and the less fortunate had to rely on street standpipes. Many had water for only a few hours and only on some days per week.³⁵ Some authorities ignored the requirement of the Act altogether, or prevaricated on grounds of expense. The 1875 Act went further, requiring the guardians to acquire the private companies if they were proving inadequate to their task, and putting in place an arbitration procedure for disputes.³⁶

The 1878 Public Health (Water) Act stipulated that ratepayers must pay for proper sewage farms. But RSAs frequently cut costs on improvements.³⁷ Only by the eve of the Great War had the municipalisation movement transformed the water industry into one of the most collectivised sectors of the British economy.³⁸

Meanwhile there was increasing analysis of water impurities. In an age before bacteriology, those inspections which were carried out tended to concentrate on the water's visual state, or its chemical additives. Murky water polluted by chemicals,

³² Wohl: *Endangered Lives* p 111.

³³ Hassan: *History* p. 51.

³⁴ Dauntton: *House and Home* pp. 246-247.

³⁵ Cartwright: *Social History* p. 95.

³⁶ Falkus, Malcolm: 'The Development of municipal trading in the nineteenth century' *Business History* XIX, 2 (1977) pp. 139-146.

³⁷ Hurren, Elizabeth: "Poor Law Versus Public Health: Diphtheria, Sanitary Reform, and the 'Crusade' against Outdoor Relief 1870-1900" *Social History of Medicine* 18 No. 1 (2005) p. 408: Brixworth, Northants in late 1880s is a good example.

³⁸ Hassan: 'Growth and Impact' p. 535 and p. 539.

minerals, sewage or other rotting material was easy to spot; clear, sparkling water was frequently taken to be a sign of purity – yet it might easily hide just the pathogenic organisms which caused cholera, typhoid, or other diseases.³⁹

The later nineteenth century gave rise to a number of experts (some real, some self-appointed) and plenty of controversy, but Christopher Hamlin concludes that:

Good water analysts at the end of the century were probably about as good at detecting dangerous contamination as were good water analysts fifty years earlier, and views on which waters were good and which were bad changed relatively little...⁴⁰ The coming of bacteriology in the 1880s only transformed the idiom of the debate, without resolving the key issues: whether water could be purified reliably enough to be safely used by the public and whether any means of water analysis could reliably demonstrate that purification”⁴¹

What seems evident is that there were many more medical people taking an interest in it by the 1870s; they were being held more rigorously to account for their findings and they were no longer making extreme claims about the reliability of their findings.

Outside the major cities and towns, progress was slow. Again the East Midlands was no leader: Leicester had no piped water at all until the 1850s.⁴² In Stamford, only 11 miles from Uppingham and significantly larger, there were severe outbreaks of

³⁹ Howe, G. Melvyn: *Man, Environment and Disease in Britain*: (Newton Abbott, 1972) p. 58.

⁴⁰ Hamlin, Christopher: *A Science of Impurity: Water Analysis in Nineteenth Century Britain* (Bristol, 1990) p. 299.

⁴¹ Hamlin, Christopher: ‘Politics and Germ Theories in Victorian Britain: the Metropolitan Water Commissions of 1867-9 and 1892-3’ in Macleod, Roy, (ed): *Government and Expertise: Specialists, Administrators and Professionals 1860-1919* (Cambridge, 2003) p. 111.

⁴² Simmons: *Victorian Leicester* pp. 12-14.

typhoid in 1868 and 1869. A year later, a report bemoaned the fact that its underlying geology had been broken up by building, quarrying and natural forces. Only a few of the streets possessed sewers, and the river (as it passed through the town) was ‘a most offensive cesspool’ and still liable to frequent flooding. The Marquess of Exeter at nearby Burleigh House supplied water to parts of the town by an Act of Parliament of 1837; others relied on fifteen pumps scattered around its streets. Parts of Stamford remained un-piped ten years later, and one of the original conduits remained in use until around 1900. The council spent seven years between 1870 and 1877 debating how to improve things, and in the following year its MOH condemned the existing supply’s impurities and offensive smell. Only in 1882 were improved arrangements made.⁴³

In Oakham in 1868 there were ‘hundreds of poor families who have to go two miles for fresh water’⁴⁴ and, when deep sewerage was installed in 1878, many of the springs were diverted. This resulted in an acute water shortage at the east end of the town, which still relied on 252 wells and three public pumps in 1897. Pollution from the sewerage system got progressively worse; although the town acquired a flushing tank in 1880 and its first piped water supply in 1885, the latter was very small in scale and a decade later many wells were condemned as suitable only for washing. Attempts in the 1890s to find a new source foundered because the water proved to be so hard and the cost so high; it was 1900 before the Oakham water company came into being and completed the provision of an adequate supply.⁴⁵ Thus Uppingham was far from alone in relying on wells, having neither a publicly nor privately funded system of piped water.

⁴³ Rogers, Alan: *The Book of Stamford* (Buckingham, 1983) p. 97.

⁴⁴ *Mercury* July 1868: see also Traylen: *Oakham* p. 18.

⁴⁵ *Ibid* p. 97.

3) COUNTRY DOCTORS

Country doctors were in the front line of the battle against disease.⁴⁶ They fought to alleviate the effects of colds, coughs and influenza in winter (often leading to bronchitis or pneumonia) and with diarrhoea, typhoid and other fevers in the summer and autumn months.⁴⁷ Fevers, chest and throat infections were especially prevalent compared with modern times.⁴⁸

The term *General Practitioner* was introduced in the 1820s to denote those who practised all types of medicine, including surgery, midwifery and pharmacy. Such men came from a wide variety of social backgrounds, and the social divide between the university-trained physician and the ‘apothecary-doctor’ (which had once been absolute) had narrowed. A doctor had several possible routes through training: he might become a Licentiate of the colleges of Physicians and Surgeons (LRCP), or of the Apothecaries’ Societies (LSA), or of one of the universities. The LRCP of London was the qualification required by the LGB for any doctor practising the complete range of medicine, surgery or midwifery. Some GPs took qualifications in only one of these areas; a small number took higher qualifications such as Member of the Royal College of Surgeons (MRCS) or Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of London (FRCP), or the Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons (FRCS).⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Digby, Anne: *Making a Medical Living: Doctors and Patients in the English Market for Medicine, 1720-1911* (Cambridge, 1994) pp. 70-77.

⁴⁷ Hardy: *Epidemic Streets*: p 192.

⁴⁸ Loudon, Irvine: *Medical Care and the General Practitioner* (Oxford, 1986) p. 61.

⁴⁹ Brand, Jeanne L: *Doctors and the State: The British Medical Profession and Government Action in Public Health 1870-1912* (Baltimore, 1965) pp. 146-149. See also Digby: *Evolution* pp. 48-52.

The Medical Act of 1858 established state registration of qualified doctors, and set up the General Medical Council to govern the profession. GPs could register on the basis of a single qualification in either medicine or surgery; the former system of medical training based on individual apprenticeships or pupillage followed by ‘walking the wards’ of a hospital had already given way to more systematic training. But GPs’ training and status did not necessarily imply a high degree of expert knowledge. New medical discoveries were not quickly handed down from laboratory scientists in Europe’s capitals to rural GPs. The medical schools were too much geared to the production of specialists and not enough to the needs of the would-be GP. Only later would the concept of general practice as a specialism in its own right be recognized.⁵⁰ Meanwhile there was a strong emphasis in medical schools on academic cramming but little on training in the practicalities needed by the generalist.⁵¹

Doctors were taught to diagnose symptoms as best they could. In 1875, when typhoid broke out in Uppingham, William Farr considered that ‘diagnosis though still imperfect, has within 35 years made remarkable progress’.⁵² Even so, both diagnosis and prognosis remained inexact skills for some time to come. While GPs dealt humanely with their patients, there was little emphasis in their training on precise measurement, and few effective curative drugs were available. Often there was little that a GP could do except to ‘reassure the patient and console the relatives’.⁵³

With the passing of the 1874 Births and Deaths Registration Act there was an increased expectation on them to certify and notify cause of death. The Infectious

⁵⁰ Digby, Anne: *The Evolution of British General Practice 1850-1948* (Oxford, 1999) p. 63.

⁵¹ Ibid p. 13.

⁵² Registrar General’s Annual Report 1875. See also Digby: *Evolution* pp. 190-191.

⁵³ Gaythorne-Hardy, Jonathan: *Doctors: The Lives and Work of GPs* (1984) p. 5.

Diseases (Notification) Act 1889 would require the metropolitan local authorities, and permit provincial ones adopting the Act, to demand prompt notification to the MOH of all cases of smallpox, asiatic cholera and many fevers.

Medical men had traditionally enjoyed high status and social respect. One mid-nineteenth century writer on rural life considered the apothecary ‘one of the most important personages in a small country town... He takes rank next to the rector and the attorney, and before the curate; and could be much less easily dispensed with than either of these worthies’.⁵⁴ But, by 1875, country GPs were fighting to establish themselves in a social hierarchy, with a large number of newly-qualified legal and medical practitioners.⁵⁵ Within the profession there was an instinctive mistrust of going into partnerships. Specialists represented a growing threat to the livelihood of the GP, who needed a core of middle-class, fee-paying patients to offset bad debts amongst their poorer patients.

GPs were battling with each other for patients, and to establish a niche market in each town, as increasing numbers of newly-qualified doctors emerged from medical schools.⁵⁶ There was also a variety of practising unqualified assistants and counter-prescribing chemists, as well as homeopaths⁵⁷ and a number of quack doctors and other charlatans.⁵⁸ The over-supply of medical services in relation to market demand was a widespread problem.⁵⁹ When children became ill, many parents relied as far as

⁵⁴ Mitford, MR: ‘Our Village (1848)’, quoted in Mingay, GE: *The Victorian Countryside* (1981) Vol. 1 p. 291.

⁵⁵ Digby: *Evolution* p. 31.

⁵⁶ Digby: *Medical Living* p. 140.

⁵⁷ Digby: *Evolution* p. 32.

⁵⁸ Rivington, Walter: *The Medical Profession: being the Essay to which was Awarded the First Carmichael Prize of £200 by the Royal College of the Surgeons of England, 1879* (Dublin, 1879) p. 3.

⁵⁹ Digby: *Evolution* p. 13 and p. 65.

possible on home remedies to effect a cure, with herbs widely used. As a last resort the poor law medical officer might be called in.⁶⁰

Livelihoods and incomes had to be built up carefully, and nurtured over a period of years. Younger sons of medical families often followed their father's footsteps, and there were many multi-generational family practices, thus strengthening a sense of territory. GPs needed organisational and entrepreneurial skills; many worked from a room at home, with their wives acting as book-keepers and practice organisers. Rural GPs made many more home visits relative to surgery contacts than their counterparts in towns, and travelled greater (and costlier) distances.⁶¹ Those who were able to augment their income by appointments as public vaccinators, coroners, medical witnesses, workhouse medical officers, or agents of births and deaths registration and infectious disease notification, fought hard to keep their positions. So did those appointed as medical officers to schools or town sanitary authorities, or even as MOHs.⁶²

Faced by these demands and pressures, it is small wonder that some doctors fought tenaciously to preserve their territory and reputation.

4) UPPINGHAM'S MEDICAL PROVISION AND DR THOMAS BELL

Uppingham School had a sanatorium on the Stockerston Road, built in 1869 by the masters for £3,000.⁶³ There was no town hospital as such⁶⁴ – although indoor relief

⁶⁰ Mingay: *Victorian Countryside* Vol. 2 p. 525.

⁶¹ Digby: *Evolution* p. 148.

⁶² Digby: *Medical Living* p. 123.

⁶³ UA: undated note. It was financed at least in part by a mortgage.

⁶⁴ ULHSG: *Uppingham in 1802* p. 12. The Leicester Royal Infirmary had opened in 1771.

had begun in 1734,⁶⁵ and the union workhouse⁶⁶ had been envisaged as a multi-purpose building: part workhouse, part orphanage, part old peoples' home and part unemployment centre. Medical books and patent medicines were widely available in local shops.⁶⁷

By 1875 three doctors served the town and its surrounding community.⁶⁸ This level of provision, in a town of 3000 people in term-time and fewer in the holidays, does not suggest a shortage of medical expertise; the ratio of medical men per head of national population at the time was just under one to 1700.⁶⁹ The competition for custom may well have been intense between the three doctors: Augustus Walford (aged 54), Frederick Brown (40), brother of WH Brown, the RSA clerk, and Thomas Bell (39) who was the most recently trained. Bell held both LRCP and MRCS qualifications dating from 1861; Walford and Brown were only qualified in surgery and as apothecaries (MRCS and LSA) – qualifications gained in various years between 1854 and 1872. In addition to his medical practice, Walford was responsible for medical matters at the workhouse and was the town's public vaccinator.⁷⁰

Bell's family had longstanding medical roots in Uppingham. His grandfather (James) was an explorer who 'graduated at Edinburgh about 1777 and settled in Uppingham in 1780 after a voyage to the polar regions as a surgeon on board a whaler'.⁷¹ He was an apothecary and a pillar of the local congregational church, where five of his children

⁶⁵ ULHSG: *Uppingham in 1802* p. 81.

⁶⁶ See ch. 2 section 4.

⁶⁷ ULHSG: *Uppingham in 1802* pp. 11-12.

⁶⁸ *Medical Register*, 1871. A fourth, John Bell (cousin of Dr Thomas Bell) is listed as a surgeon, but he does not appear to have been practising in the town at this time. He lived in the High Street.

⁶⁹ Rivington: *Medical Profession* p. 2.

⁷⁰ Kelly's *Directory* 1876.

⁷¹ *USM* June 1915.

were baptised. One of them, (John, father of Thomas) had practised medicine in Uppingham for many years, and was now in his eighties, living in retirement in the town.⁷²

Thomas Bell ('Thos') was also the school's medical officer (MO). A man in his late thirties with a wife and four children aged between 4 and 9, he lived right alongside the school boarding houses that would be typhoid stricken, in High Street West.⁷³ He would have felt all the economic and territorial pressures which faced GPs, even though he had lived in the town all his life and had worked in partnership with his father in the years after he qualified. He had an emotional (as well as professional) attachment to the school: the fifth of seven brothers who all passed through it, he had entered it as a day-boy in Dr Holden's time (1846), when he was scarcely nine years old. Apart from a few years in London at medical school, he would spend the rest of his life living within a few yards of the school.⁷⁴

His obituary article in the *USM* in 1914 states that after qualifying in London in 1861, he had returned to Uppingham with good references from his tutors. There were those who praised his support for Thring through his 'calm judgement (and) unfailing care'. It is likely that he was a shy man:

Absolutely devoid of anything like self-advertisement that he hardly did himself justice...his reserve was, in great part, repression – an element in the deliberate sobriety of his judgement. It was often, but mistakenly, thought to be indifference. A more buoyant manner, a more enterprising temperament

⁷² ULHSG: *Uppingham in 1802* p. 11.

⁷³ 1871 census: RG10 3301-2.

⁷⁴ *Medical Register* 1861 and subsequent volumes, and *USM* 1914.

might have made his work brighter and more attractive; but one may doubt whether in that case it would have contributed so much to the building up of Uppingham...⁷⁵

Bell was clearly conscientious. He had outside interests – notably a keen interest in natural history: ‘knowing every inch of the countryside around for miles’. But he lived for his work:

Only those who knew him well knew how he took pains to keep himself abreast of medical knowledge, and how often great part of his rare and short holidays was spent in visiting some large hospital.... His work with his poorer patients was splendid, and in their cottages perhaps he was seen at his best. He was unremitting in his patient care of them, and would himself give personal attention to petty details of nursing... He was a conspicuous instance of the kind-hearted helpfulness so common among medical men.⁷⁶

Reading between the lines of this generous and affectionate tribute, however, it is clear that in medical terms he was not a high-flyer. It is likely that his achievements came by hard graft rather than brilliant, rapid diagnosis: ‘By high aim and steady persistency he achieved results as good, may be, as those attained more quickly by others’. The writer added: ‘Though housemasters may at times have longed for a quicker decision in a suspicious case, they seldom had reason to regret his deliberation’.

⁷⁵ *USM* 1914.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

5) THE GROWTH OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH MOVEMENT

The supervisory power of the MOH in times of medical difficulty represented a new pressure on GPs. The previous half-century had seen a marked rise in public interest in health matters, to the point at which it had become a moral crusade. Echoing John Wesley's earlier assertion that 'Cleanliness is indeed next to godliness',⁷⁷ the *Servants' Magazine* had defined the issue in 1839: 'Dirt is the natural emblem and consequence of vice... Cleanliness is an essential in a servant... a dirty christian is considered all but an impossibility, and a contradiction in terms...' ⁷⁸ The reduction or total elimination of dirt in the form of poor drainage, foul water, manure heaps and other public nuisances became a cause taken up by sections of the medical profession – and by the medical press.

The *BMJ* became the public health mouthpiece,⁷⁹ and in a number of articles in 1876 it reviewed the state of the nation's health. The death-rate from fever "including typhus, enteric and simple continued fevers was also lower than for any year for which records exist".⁸⁰ Even so, there were still 12,500 deaths per year. It concluded that sanitary authorities must be even more active:⁸¹

The Registrar-General's quarterly bulletin... possesses an interest which is constantly increasing.... Death-rates and their details have become almost popular topics. Public health is already feeling the change in public opinion... There is satisfaction to be derived from the evidence of the decline

⁷⁷ CUL: Wesley, John: 'On Dress: A Sermon on I Peter III, 3, 4' (Boston, 1811).

⁷⁸ *The Servants' Magazine, under the superintendence of the Committee of the London Female Mission* Vol. II (1839) pp. 57-59.

⁷⁹ Bartrip, PWJ: *Mirror of Medicine: A History of the British Medical Journal* (1990) pp. 55-56.

⁸⁰ Registrar General's Quarterly Report Oct-Dec 1875.

⁸¹ *BMJ* 26 February 1876.

in urban death-rates, in spite of the increasing density of our town populations. That rural death-rates do not show a similar improvement can only be accepted as evidence that in health matters there is no such thing as standing still.⁸²

One response was the creation of a network of MOHs – part of the wider growth of new local government positions which included sanitary engineers, food and drugs specialists, building and factory inspectors and town clerks.⁸³ This replicated the earlier developments in cities after Chadwick's contribution to the Poor Law commission in the 1840s. Liverpool (the city from which the largest number of doctors' sons came to Uppingham) appointed William Henry Duncan as its first MOH in 1847. The Association for Medical Officers was founded in 1856. As MOH for the City of London (1848-55) and then working for central government as MOH to the Privy Council (1855-76), Sir John Simon created a medical department to oversee public health and factory legislation, and to promote scientific research and vaccination.

He planned for it to supervise the medical profession as a whole, believing in the need for a strong central authority, with one single government ministry presiding over both the Poor Law arrangements and public health. A registrar-general would monitor disease and sickness statistics. Local authorities, each with a MOH, would call on the expertise of a medical and engineering inspectorate when they needed it. The government accepted all these ideas, and incorporated them into the 1872 Public

⁸² *BMJ* 5 February 1876.

⁸³ Szreter, Simon: *Fertility, Class and Gender* (Cambridge, 1996) p. 107 and p. 190.

Health Act. Simon himself became chief medical officer of the new department which the Act created – the LGB.⁸⁴

Thereafter, most major cities appointed their own MOHs - albeit reluctantly in many cases.⁸⁵ Some cities shared local ratepayers' wariness of both the increased expense and the implied centralisation of government control. In Birmingham 'only when the Public Health Act of 1872 made the appointment of a medical officer compulsory for even the smallest rural district did the corporation of the third biggest English borough reluctantly step into line'.⁸⁶ In Leeds, the Corporation kept the salary of their MOH unchanged for six years; he promptly left and they advertised for his successor at an even lower salary of only £300 per year – with the result that they attracted a very low-calibre successor whose incompetence and neglect contributed to the Headingley typhoid outbreak of 1889.⁸⁷

However others, including Robert Weale, the Poor Law Inspector, believed that in rural areas the local Poor Law Medical Officers and other staff could easily undertake sanitary functions, at significantly lower cost. These arrangements were seized on with enthusiasm by ratepayers, who (with most public health legislation being permissive rather than statutory) were happy to follow the retrenchment thinking of the Poor Law officials during the 'crusade' period, and to contract doctors to combine District Medical Officer for the Poor (DMOP) and MOH work – and simultaneously to reduce the number of DMOP posts within individual unions.⁸⁸ The prospect of

⁸⁴ Frazer, WM: *A History of Public Health 1834-1939* (1950) pp. 114-117.

⁸⁵ Wohl: *Endangered Lives* p. 181.

⁸⁶ Hennock, EP: *Fit & Proper Persons: Ideal and Reality in Nineteenth Century Government* (1973) p. 114.

⁸⁷ *Ibid* p. 214.

⁸⁸ Hodgkinson, RG: *Origins of the National Health Service: the Medical Services of the New Poor*

poorly-paid, hard-pressed and technically untrained doctors becoming MOHs in innumerable small local districts filled Simon with dismay – even though they had to send regular reports to the LGB.⁸⁹

With so much inertia and opposition there were still only 50 or so MOHs by 1872.⁹⁰

But the 1870s Public Health Acts made MOHs into prominent figures in their own domains and forced the rural districts to make their first appointments.

They had to be qualified medical practitioners, but their skill and knowledge was variable – as was their determination and zeal. Some were almost messianic in challenging local employers and councils to put money into improvements; others were content to settle for a quieter and less contentious life.

There was little attempt by the LGB to specify the type of person to be appointed, or the level of expertise expected from them; the LGB could provide expert medical back-up where necessary. It was not thought necessary to debar them from seeing their own individual patients.⁹¹ Many authorities had two big problems in finding suitable candidates. The work appealed only to a certain type of doctor. Even if he remained a medical man (which most strove to do) rather than becoming a bureaucrat, after the first generation of able and imaginative MOHs left the scene, high-quality successors were harder to recruit.⁹² In many rural areas - including Rutland - the

Law 1834-1871 (1967) p. 649 and p. 678.

⁸⁹ Lambert, Royston: *Sir John Simon 1816-1904 and English Social Administration* (1963) pp. 508-511.

⁹⁰ Wohl: *Endangered Lives* p. 181.

⁹¹ Young, RKFJ: 'Sanitary Administration under the Local Government Board 1871-8' (Oxford B.Litt. thesis, 1964) pp. 48-49.

⁹² Wilkinson, Anne: 'The Beginnings of Disease Control in London' (Oxford D.Phil. thesis, 1980) p. 13 and p. 321. See also Watkins, Dorothy: 'The English Revolution in Social Medicine 1889-1911' (London Ph.D. thesis, 1984) p. 35.

population was so small that they could not afford a full-time appointment or an officer of high calibre without a huge increase in the rates – despite some subsidy.⁹³

Simon had been appointed in London in the 1840s on a salary of only £500 p.a. – later raised to £800.⁹⁴ Large towns were paying up to £1,000 by the end of the century, but many MOHs still earned only £200-500;⁹⁵ a mere 6% of them could afford to be full-time and many were on short tenure. Some districts dragged their feet: fewer than half the rural authorities had filled their vacancy by 1874.⁹⁶ Others appointed men of low calibre.

But other RSAs joined forces to pay a salary to attract a stronger candidate. This initiative created MOH-led *districts* - yet another set of territorial units within local government. *The BMJ* protested in an editorial in May 1874 entitled *Fancy-work in Sanitary Organisation*:

There is something manifestly absurd in officers constituting their own authorities, yet this is in effect what these gentlemen propose to accomplish... Would it not be wiser... to call on Parliament to [make their boundaries coincide] with the older and more successful administrative divisions of the kingdom...?⁹⁷

⁹³ Hodgkinson: *Origins* p. 105. In 1846 Rutland had only 8 MOs, and they were poorly paid compared with those in most other counties: their *total* salary was only £308.

⁹⁴ New Dictionary of National Biography Vol. 50 (Oxford, 2005). pp. 660-663. Duncan was paid £750 once his post became full-time.

⁹⁵ Wohl: *Endangered Lives* pp. 186-187.

⁹⁶ *Ibid* p. 182.

⁹⁷ *BMJ* 30 May 1874.

This first generation of MOHs did not have an easy time. Their powers were poorly defined by the 1872 Act, whose authors had envisaged them largely as analysers and record-keepers rather than leaders in a new field. They campaigned for stricter disease notification.⁹⁸ Yet they had a huge range of new legislation within their remit if they saw fit - and many new ideas to bring together if public health and preventive medicine were to be established as a priority in the public consciousness. Local GPs resisted the MOH's intervention in diagnosis of their patients as a threat to their authority, and (from 1889, when the Infectious Diseases Notification Act was passed, to what they saw as its onerous procedures).⁹⁹

Householders who welcomed their local doctor often resented the MOH – especially if he recommended the removal or isolation of the patient.¹⁰⁰ There was a stigma about infectious disease. The ratepayers resented the expense; within months of the passing of the 1875 Act, a meeting of MOHs for some of the new combined districts throughout England was calling for stronger tenure arrangements against local RSAs and angry ratepayers calling for their dismissal.¹⁰¹ In Lincoln, when the corporation considered establishing a local board of health (1866), the 'economists' sent threatening letters to its members, one of whom was told that his coffin had been ordered; another resigned after a similar murder threat.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ TNA MH25/27: NW Association of MOHs to Sclater Booth 29 March 1876.

⁹⁹ Porter, Dorothy: *Health, Civilisation and the State* (1999) p. 136. See also Wilkinson: 'Disease Control' p. 65.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid* pp. 23-28.

¹⁰¹ Young: *Sanitary Administration* pp. 174-5.

¹⁰² Wohl: *Endangered Lives* p. 171.

Local councils could be miserly with expenses as well as salary. In larger areas travelling could be extensive. MOHs had to use their own gig, horse and groom.¹⁰³ Many were sustained only by a passionate belief in the value of their work – ‘a new cadre of officials who devoted their lives to improving the lot of the urban poor... it was (they) who actively enquired into reasons for stubbornly high levels of mortality’.¹⁰⁴

Given all this, Dr Bell (and Thring himself) might well have found in 1875 that there was still no MOH serving Uppingham at all, or a low-level officer promoted from being inspector of nuisances, maybe someone timid and out of his depth.¹⁰⁵ As it was, they found themselves dealing with the MOH for one of these new combined districts. The Uppingham RSA had joined forces with a number of others in the Northampton area, and had appointed as their MOH a medical practitioner of substance, intelligence and iron determination: Dr Alfred Haviland.

6) ALFRED HAVILAND

Like Thring, Alfred Haviland came from a Somerset family. Both his great-uncle and father were surgeons in Bridgwater; his father’s first cousin was John Haviland, Cambridge University Regius Professor of Physic and Fellow of St John’s College.¹⁰⁶ Born in 1825, the fifth of eight children, he qualified from University College Hospital, London, in 1845 and became (like Dr Bell, a near-contemporary of Haviland in age) a partner in practice with his father.

¹⁰³ Frazer: *English Public Health* p. 122.

¹⁰⁴ Szreter: *Fertility, Class and Gender* pp. 190 and 197.

¹⁰⁵ Hamlin, Christopher: ‘Sanitary Policing and the Local State, 1873-1874: A Statistical Study of English and Welsh Towns’ *Social History of Medicine* 18 No. 1 (2005) p. 40.

¹⁰⁶ Venn, John and Venn, JA, (comp): *Alumni Cantabrigienses* (1947).

In 1849 Bridgwater suffered a major cholera outbreak lasting four months,¹⁰⁷ with over 1000 cases and 200 deaths¹⁰⁸ – believed to have been caused by water taken from wells which had been cross-infected from fields of rotten potatoes.¹⁰⁹ This gave Haviland first-hand experience of the dangers of epidemics – and of local demands for a better water supply.¹¹⁰ He was appointed to practise surgery at Bridgwater Hospital¹¹¹ but his career was cruelly cut short when he poisoned his finger during an operation in 1867 and nearly lost his life.¹¹²

Haviland's school of medical opinion set particular store on physicians having a thorough knowledge of local climate, geology and natural history, as well as living conditions.¹¹³ During the cholera outbreak, Haviland took meteorological observations day and night. He established that cholera cases increased after "calms" of weather, reducing as soon as the south-west wind returned. In 1855 he produced his first major book *Climate, Weather and Disease* – used as the basis for part of the Registrar-General's annual report nine years later. He also tabulated ten years of death rates from these reports (1851-60) to demonstrate the geographical distribution of heart disease.

So began a lifetime's interest in medical mapping. Haviland took this skill to previously unknown levels of sophistication. His work included studies of cancer (1868), and dropsy and phthisis (1875). He discoursed on clays and limestones, on

¹⁰⁷ *BMJ* 27 June 1903: obituary article.

¹⁰⁸ BPL: Squibbs, Philip J: *A Bridgwater Diary 1800-1967* (Bridgwater, 1968) p. 64.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid* p. 106.

¹¹⁰ BPL: Jarman, SG: *A History of Bridgwater* (1889) p. 139.

¹¹¹ SRO: Hunter's *Directory* 1848.

¹¹² BPL: Jarman, SG: *The Bridgwater Infirmary* (1890) p. 35: also *Bridgwater Mercury* 20 Feb 1867.

¹¹³ Barrett, Frank A: 'Alfred Haviland's Nineteenth-Century Map Analysis of the Geographical Distribution of Disease in England and Wales' *Social Science and Medicine* 46 No. 6 (1998) pp. 767-781.

medical geography, on the merits and shortcomings of Brighton, Scarborough and the Isle of Man as health resorts, and on the follies of hurrying to catch trains (a mode of transport which, it had been suggested, tended to cause heart attacks) in an essay entitled *Hurried to death*. He became an honorary lecturer at St Thomas's hospital, and was awarded the silver medal of the Royal Society of Arts in 1879 – which caused the *Lancet* to comment: 'His maps are unique, and have rendered a great service to medical science'.¹¹⁴

Haviland was a tireless writer and lecturer – mostly on topics related to climate and disease. He wrote forcefully, as in his report on the Kingsthorpe area of Northampton, which he described as having:

...with a magnificent supply of pure spring water, is in a most loathsome condition. The water is contaminated with the filthy ooziings and drainings from slaughter-houses, wells converted into cess-pools, obstructed drains, muck heaps and surface water....¹¹⁵

He frequently courted controversy; indeed in many ways he seems to have thrived on it, even becoming involved in a fierce dispute with his relatives over the family genealogy.¹¹⁶ His lectures, books and papers were summarised and reviewed in both the *Lancet* and the *BMJ* on a number of occasions between 1872 and his death in 1903 - mostly, but not always, favourably.

¹¹⁴ *Lancet* 28 June 1879.

¹¹⁵ Brown, Cynthia: *Northampton 1835-1895: Shire Town, New Town* (Chichester, 1990) p. 94.

¹¹⁶ Frost, Josephine C: *Haviland Genealogy* (New York, 1914) p. 14.

An un-named reviewer in the journal *Athenaeum* in 1876 praised the quality of Haviland's maps – but he also identified major problems with his methods and results, and believed that his opinions were hasty and arbitrary.¹¹⁷ He further suggested that Haviland had little idea about the true cause of typhoid, being a 'closet miasmatist'¹¹⁸ (whose) idea of air-sewage was basically that of a poisonous gas or noxious fumes'.¹¹⁹ Modern writers have contrasting views: TW Freeman, in an article on Haviland's medical mapping and describes him as 'a devoted worker',¹²⁰ but Frank A Barrett believes that 'although his technique was innovative, his analysis was flawed'.¹²¹ Barrett concludes that Haviland was so determined to demonstrate the value of medical mapping that 'a grave weakness of (his) analytical ability was that when he encountered contradictions he did not believe that these facts pointed to errors in his conceptualisation of the aetiology'.¹²²

Haviland was appointed as the first MOH for the scattered Northampton districts (spread over four counties) in April 1873.¹²³ His salary was unusually high by the standards of the time, at £800 per year.¹²⁴ The *BMJ* published regular lists of new MOH appointments in this period, mostly at less than half this sum¹²⁵, and it records that there were 63 candidates for the post.¹²⁶ Within a year Haviland was involved in a spirited exchange of views with his new employers over their refusal to pay the costs

¹¹⁷ See also appendix 6 section 5 for another example, some years after the Uppingham epidemic.

¹¹⁸ See appendix 4 section 1 for a discussion of theories about the causes of typhoid.

¹¹⁹ Anonymous: 'Review of Geographical Distribution of Heart Disease, Cancer and Phthisis by Alfred Haviland' *Athenaeum* 4 March 1876 p. 333.

¹²⁰ Freeman, TW: 'Nineteenth Century Medical Geographer' *Geographical Magazine* X (1978) p. 90

¹²¹ Barrett: 'Haviland' pp. 767-781, and *Disease and Geography: The History of an Idea*. (Toronto, 2000) p. 325.

¹²² Barrett: 'Haviland' p. 767, and Barrett: *Disease* p. 323.

¹²³ *Bridgwater Mercury* 16 April 73. See introduction, section 6d for the area which he had to cover.

¹²⁴ TNA: MH12/9815: LGB papers 3 May 1873. Young: 'Sanitary Administration (p. 158) confirms that salaries ranged between £200 and £800 for most posts.

¹²⁵ *BMJ* 26 Apr 1873: multiple references to MOH appointments.

¹²⁶ *Ibid* p. 480.

of publishing his first, lengthy annual report – which he then produced himself as an off-print from the local newspaper.¹²⁷

He had a vast territory to cover, cutting across all sorts of existing sanitary, poor law and local government boundaries. Dr Henry Rumsey, president of the Gloucestershire Branch of the BMA used this as an example of all that was wrong with the new system: ‘poor Mr Haviland having to travel over a most extensive and impracticable circuit imperfectly supplied with railways’.¹²⁸ Its boundaries were hardly logical, as it included parts of three other counties, but without the Brixworth and Kettering unions which lay geographically in its centre.¹²⁹

He set to work with a will. His first annual report on Northamptonshire is a comprehensive document, descriptive and statistical, which drew heavily on his mapping methods.¹³⁰ Considering the short time that he had been in post and the geographical extent of his area, he had worked fast. It seems that he had a good eye for detail, although the suspicion lingers that some of it was random and designed merely to impress his employers.¹³¹

He concentrated particularly on recent issues relating to fever, believing that typhoid was ‘a national disgrace; we ought not to rest until we reduce it to one simply local or personal; its existence will then become punishable’.¹³² He observed that it was

¹²⁷ NCL: *Northampton Herald*, 13 June 1903.

¹²⁸ *BMJ* 26 June 1873.

¹²⁹ Young: ‘Sanitary Administration’ p. 137 and *BMJ* 26 June 1873.

¹³⁰ NCL: Haviland, Alfred: *Report on the Geographical Distribution of Fever within the area of the Combined Sanitary Authorities in the Counties of Northampton, Leicester, Rutland and Bucks* 11 July 1874.

¹³¹ E.g in criticising stream courses unsatisfactorily diverted for the new railway at Brackley, unregulated muck-heaps in Market Harborough and a burst pigsty in Oundle.

¹³² *BMJ* 10 Feb 1872: *Abstract of Two Lectures by Alfred Haviland Esq.*

generally contracted either through infected water or sewer gases or by contagion, but he declined to commit himself in the miasma/contagion debate: '[It] is very-present amongst us but is perhaps one of the most easily preventable of the many forms of death with which we now have to deal', and 'I believe that the disease and death returns of typhoid fever are the best indicators that we have of the sanitary condition of any place, whether in the town or in the country'. He praised the impact of recent legislation, but he stated that further progress could only be made if the powers of the RSAs were strengthened. He rounded off:

I have made typhoid the subject of my annual report simply because I believe that it is the disease which teaches us best how to be prepared for others. Let us once successfully subdue this great but preventable cause of death, and I feel assured that we shall be able to cope with its allies. Let us strive to get pure water, cart away our unpolluted sewage, and institute a system of scavenging throughout our villages...

A strong supporter of ash closets, he attacked those who believed in water-based sewage systems:

I believe [then] we shall hear less and less of sewage farms, until the time shall arrive when they will become things of the past, like their progenitors the water closet.¹³³

¹³³ Haviland: *Report 11 July 1874* p. 7.

In Uppingham in 1874, he found an authority which saw little need for urgency. Compared with Leicester its problems were small; its population was less dense, its incidence of most diseases was lower and (having no railway) it was comparatively vagrant-free.¹³⁴ Its relaxed attitude seemed justified by the annual reports of Simon's department, which suggested that its state of health was no worse than countless others.

Haviland concurred with Simon: he stated that, compared with neighbouring authorities, Uppingham's state of health in 1873 was good. In England and Wales as a whole, the figure for deaths in the years 1861-70 had been 2,242 per 100,000; in the Uppingham registration district it was only 1,846 – lower than all the other fifteen districts in the Northampton combined districts.¹³⁵ Deaths from fever, diarrhoea and diphtheria in Uppingham had all been low in the 1850 and 1860s - as had the number of deaths of those aged under 1 and under 5 years old. Only scarlet fever figures were markedly higher than in some surrounding districts.¹³⁶

Haviland was to confirm this optimistic view in his subsequent investigation into the events of 1875.¹³⁷ Uppingham came out statistically well on every count, as well as in comparison with its neighbour, Oakham (which lay outside his territory). Even when he compared Uppingham's figures to those of a group of the healthiest districts in the country it was one of the safest – except where scarlet fever, measles and child mortality were concerned. He concluded: 'These figures prove incontestably that the

¹³⁴ He cited the Registrar General's statistics on causes of deaths 1875.

¹³⁵ 12 in Northants., 1 in Rutland, 1 in Leics., and 1 in Bucks.

¹³⁶ Haviland: *Report 11 July 1874* p. 9: table 2 – citing Registrar General's Annual Reports for these years.

¹³⁷ Haviland, Alfred: *Report on the Late Outbreak of Enteric Fever in Archdeacon Johnson's School, Uppingham, Rutland: June-November 1875* pp. 35-37.

town ranks high in the scale of health'.¹³⁸ This pattern of overall stability (apart from a small dip in 1875) is confirmed by the Registrar General's *Annual Reports*. In a typical year only a dozen or so deaths took place in the workhouse; there were a similar number from diarrhoea and between 3 and 7 fatalities from typhoid each year from 1870-74.

Proportions of young and old who died seem unremarkable for the time. In the town over the same 1870-74 period the burial registers show that 1870 was a hard year – 45 of the 61 deaths were of people aged under 18.¹³⁹ Thereafter totals were lower, and the proportion of young victims dropped to between a third and a half. The quarterly returns for spring 1875 show that 19 of the 36 deaths were of people aged 60+,¹⁴⁰ and in the year as a whole, of 55 deaths 17 were under the age of 10 and 21 over 60.¹⁴¹ Births in these years were remarkably constant, at around 145 per year.

Moreover Uppingham had not been singled out for inclusion in the special appendix of inspectors' reports nationwide from the years 1870-3, which covered 149 typhoid outbreaks – nor in the 20 special reports on such epidemics brought together in one publication in 1877. There had been no reason to include the town in the list of 42 inspections carried out in 1873 in connection with the local administration of sanitary laws.¹⁴²

¹³⁸ Ibid p. 37.

¹³⁹ ROLLR DE4862/1: only a partial indicator of deaths as a whole, as they include only those burials carried out by the Church of England.

¹⁴⁰ *Mercury* 9 April 1875.

¹⁴¹ Registrar General's Annual Report 1875.

¹⁴² Reports of the MOH of the Privy Council and Local Government Board 1873.

Haviland did, however, find one cause for concern in his first (1874) report.

Uppingham's death rate from fever *over a period* was not falling as fast as in other places, after the good years of the previous two decades. During the 1850s only four of the twelve union districts in his area (Oundle, Uppingham, Market Harborough and Towcester) had had fewer than 60 deaths per 100,000 people through various fevers. The average for the whole of England was 88. In the 1860s, (average again 88) only three achieved this - again including Uppingham, but its average figure had gone up from 45 to 54. In 1873 it stood at 57. He concluded: 'This is too stationary to be satisfactory'.¹⁴³

Haviland's work has the air of a man of zeal and energy, motivated by a passionate belief in the cause of public health. It was unlikely that he would have found a kindred spirit in the unambitious and somewhat defensive Dr Bell.

7) CONCLUSION

Thus in 1875 Uppingham was no worse, and possibly better, than many comparable towns in respect of sanitary and water-supply arrangements. It was certainly ahead of some of its immediate neighbours in terms of sanitary reform.

The town was well provided for medically, but it is likely that its GPs, especially Dr Bell, were of lesser medical calibre than the energetic and highly determined Dr Haviland – a busy and quick-thinking MOH with a very different set of priorities from the Uppingham doctor. Uppingham also represented only a small part of his territorial responsibilities.

¹⁴³ MOH's Annual Report 1874 p. 7.

CHAPTER 4 – TYPHOID: THE FIRST TWO OUTBREAKS 1875

This chapter describes the growing interest in public health matters in Uppingham in the years before the agricultural recession, and Thring's growing concern up to 1875 about the state of the town. The years 1857-75 provide a revealing snapshot of the many and varied obstacles and sources of resistance to sanitary reform in a rural community - which would have surely discouraged even a conscientious guardian from taking bold initiatives.

It then explains the unusual variations in weather patterns in 1875-6 and charts the appearance of typhoid at various times during that year, and the crisis which engulfed the school in the autumn, leading to a crisis in parental confidence and the decision to end the term well before Christmas. It was a period in which the school's staff must have been under extreme strain; as morale worsened the school responded aggressively to the crisis which it suddenly faced, while the RSA seems to have been incapable of doing anything more than taking defensive action – by trying to avoid or deflect charges (from both the MOH and the LGB) of having been supine. It did this by placing the blame firmly on to the School, even though investigations were still taking place.

Both sides appealed to Haviland to give a judgement on the situation they faced, and he prepared to deliver a report on the sanitary state of the School and its houses.

Despite approaches from both town and school, the LGB tried to avoid taking sides or to become too involved in what it saw as an essentially local matter.

1) EVENTS IN THE YEARS UP TO 1875

The perception of people in Oakham in the 1860s¹ that Uppingham was more proactive in sanitary reform had some substance. The increasing interest in public health noted by the *BMJ* surfaced in Uppingham well before 1875: the LGB and its predecessors had numerous dealings with the RSA over the previous two decades – a period in which the RSA struggled to balance a desire for improvement with a fear about its cost.

The town suffered plague in 1840, 1848 and 1850,² followed by a severe epidemic in 1853-4, possibly only two years after a smaller one.³ The *Stamford Mercury* reported that ‘the filth from the backyards which in most cases flows in to the open channels in the public street will scarcely be tolerated in any other decent market town.’⁴

However, the paper had also carried reports four months earlier of ‘a plan... for a main drain at a depth of 10 feet that met with a good deal of opposition on the grounds that such a depth would drain the wells as well as the cellars, and the plans were accordingly rejected.’⁵

Concerns continued. In 1857 churchwarden William Compton (who had a house in the High Street and a wine and spirit shop in the Market Place),⁶ complained about the state of the drainage. As a result there was an enquiry⁷, and the Nuisance Removal

¹ See ch. 3 section 1.

² UA: Jennings, JC: Analysis of Uppingham Church Registers.

³ Uppingham Local History Studies Group: *Uppingham in 1851: A Night in the Life of a Thriving Town* (Uppingham, 2001) p. 7.

⁴ December 1854: Traylen, T: *Uppingham in Rutland* (Stamford, 1982) p. 20.

⁵ Ibid p. 20: August 1854.

⁶ Also a trustee of local charities and generous benefactor: information from Peter Lane. See ch. 8 section 9.

⁷ PRO/TNA MH12/9815: May 1857.

Committee commissioned a survey of drainage options⁸ – which had resulted a year later in the main sewer being laid along the northern part of the town at cost of £750. This main pipe and its branch sewers covered much of High Street West and School Lane (including several school boarding houses), High Street East and Orange Street, North Street, Queen Street and Adderley Street. It ran down Seaton Lane to a sewage farm a mile from the town. However it was laid at a very shallow depth and the diameter of its pipes was narrow (mostly only 9 inches).⁹ Not all the properties in the streets it served were linked up to it. Seven years later, in 1865, the decision was taken to pave the streets with York slabs, at a cost of £1,101.¹⁰

Improvements raised expectations – but also anxieties. The growth of the school had greatly increased pressure on the town's essential services, and the housemasters became increasingly worried about the lack of a proper water supply. One, the widely-read Theophilus Rowe, gave a lecture in the town in 1870 on the topic of *Our Water*.¹¹ 'He showed that the water over a great part of the town was bad,' recorded Thring. 'Mr Foster, a gentleman in the town,'¹² Mr Mullins [housemaster of West Deyne] and I had an Enquirer down,¹³ but the affair came to nothing.'¹⁴ However a year later (1871), with the debt for the earlier improvements paid off, an enquiry was held, at which the School made demands to the RSA for piped water and a better public sewerage system.¹⁵ A LGB Inspector (Mr Pidcock) produced a far-seeing and ambitious report. Whether he came at the invitation of the guardians or on his own

⁸ *Mercury* March 1858. See also Traylen: *Uppingham* p. 20.

⁹ See Cambridge, NA: 'The Life and Times of Dr Alfred Carpenter 1825-1892' (London Univ. D.Med. thesis, 2002): there are parallels here with Croydon in the 1850s. The Rutland Museum acquired technical drawings of these sewers and subsequent additions during the summer of 2005.

¹⁰ *Mercury*, July 1865. See also Traylen: *Uppingham* p. 21.

¹¹ Later Headmaster of Tonbridge. See ch. 1 section 2 for his comments on Uppingham's water supply.

¹² Foster would be a guardian by 1875.

¹³ Identity unknown: presumably from London.

¹⁴ TNA MH12/9815: Thring to LGB February 1876.

¹⁵ Rawlinson, Robert: *Uppingham: Town and School Reports 1876* p. 9.

initiative is not known, but he pointed to the essential contradiction between trying to provide a water supply based on wells (which was being hindered by the drainage measures already put in place) and an efficient system of sanitation based on water closets and cesspits drainage (which itself necessitated a good water supply, and would be prone to contamination from joint leaks in the pipes connecting water closets to pits).¹⁶

He recommended the abolition of cesspits and water closets in favour of earth ones. Proper rainfall channels and drains to convey drainage water away from the wells were highly desirable. He made a particular point about the lack of ventilation of the existing drainage, convinced that the small sewage farm to the east should be extended, and (ideally) a reservoir provided to the north of the town, to meet its growing size and needs. He estimated the total cost at about £6,000 plus any necessary land purchase.¹⁷

The school welcomed this report,¹⁸ and Wales (chairman of the Sewer Authority under pre-1872 arrangements), called a meeting of ratepayers to consider it. They adopted a less ambitious scheme: the sewers would be extended, but they planned to delay the installation of an intercepting tank and other extensions until the route of a proposed new railway was known. They made an application to the LGB for a £800 loan for sewerage improvements, to be paid for by a rate increase.¹⁹

¹⁶ UA: *A Report Presented to the Uppingham Sewer Authority Committee, on the Drainage, Water Supply etc, of the Town, by JH Pidcock Esq., Engineer, May 1871.*

¹⁷ TNA MH12/9815: Notice from Revd W Wales, Chairman of the Sewer Authority May 1871.

¹⁸ Ibid: Thring to LGB February 1876.

¹⁹ Ibid: Wales request to LGB 22 August 1871.

Messrs Whitaker and Perrott, an engineering firm, was commissioned to produce a 10-page specification for extensions to go along the south side of the town, linking up with sewer pipes from the rectory and the market square. The new main sewer would be deeper and larger in diameter than earlier works (12' minimum, and 15' or 18' maximum, beneath areas of high density housing), and there would be frequent ventilators. This new sewer would run from the west of the town along Stockerston Road and past the Lower School, before heading south-east along South Back Way and across the London Road, alongside Ingram's field and thence to an extended sewage farm on Seaton Lane. Thanks to favourable gradients, very little pumping would be needed.²⁰ Another LGB inspector (Mr Morgan) reported favourably on the scheme in November 1871 – including the additional cost estimates (£820 for piping, and £320 for disposal costs: £1,140 in all) and loan arrangements.

This episode showed why the impending Public Health Acts were needed to streamline sanitary law. A dispute grew up between the Sewer Authority (headed by Wales) and the Nuisances Removal committee of the RSA (headed by Barnard Smith) over precisely how the extra sewage would be deodorized. Wales's group was responsible for the proposed improvements, but Barnard Smith believed it would be unwise, possibly illegal, for the new sewers to be built before water supply problems had been sorted out: the main sewer still discharged into a ditch at one point along Seaton Road – a situation which local people had long complained about and which might actually cause pollution of wells if the sewers were extended.²¹ When rainfall was heavy, the rising water table would put the wells at risk.

²⁰ Ibid: Submission to LGB 22 August 1871.

²¹ Ibid: Letter from Barnard Smith to LGB 16 March 1872.

Whitaker and Perrott drew up additional plans in March 1872. Despite the fact that there was smallpox in the town in June, followed by scarlet fever in November, action followed only slowly.²² There was a prolonged correspondence with the London authorities, after which there was a further £400 loan application later in the year towards further sewage outfall works on the north-east side of Seaton Lane, which would now cost an additional £500.²³ The estimates were to prove optimistic; the tenders came in markedly higher than anticipated.²⁴

Under the 1872 Act, sewer powers were passed to the new RSA, and Wales and Barnard Smith effectively joined forces. Both served on the new sanitary sub-committee along with eight ratepayers who included two of the masters owning the largest houses (Hodgkinson and Rowe).²⁵ This sub-committee soon experienced opposition from the ratepayers, both to the rate levels needed to repay the loan and to the prospect of increased domestic costs to abolish their own cesspits.²⁶

At this point the issues widened. Sir Charles Adderley began to dispute both the siting and the lease arrangements for the proposal to extend the sewage farm, on the grounds of nuisance. His land lay next to the proposed site (owned by Wales), and he became involved in a dispute with one of his neighbours, John Pateman (a solicitor partner of William Sheild but a supporter of the school),²⁷ who favoured the proposed site. The

²² Traylen: *Uppingham* p. 23, based on *Mercury* reports.

²³ TNA MH12/5814: Submission to LGB 4 March 1872.

²⁴ Ibid: Whitaker and Perrott to WH Brown 26 September 1872.

²⁵ Ibid: Special meeting of the (new) Uppingham RSA 18 September 1872.

²⁶ Rawlinson: *Uppingham* p. 8.

²⁷ This may have put him at odds with one of his partners, William Sheild, who was a guardian. It shows how an epidemic could potentially polarize attitudes right across the local governing class.

argument centred on the extent to which the growth of the school was responsible for the increased pressure on the town services.²⁸

Mr Morgan, another LGB inspector, came back to investigate further, concluding that the School's 'villa residences' were the main cause of the changing nature of the western end of the town, and that yet further additions to the sewage farm works costing £120 would meet most of Adderley's concerns. It was agreed that the tanks should be covered and the ground planted;²⁹ Adderley then withdrew his objection. The work was carried out at the sewage farm, but as a whole, it was piecemeal improvement insofar as individual house drainage was left largely untouched.³⁰ Moreover, the seeds had been sown for future disputes between town and school.

As the costs of these works rose, other loan applications followed: £400 in 1873; £400 again in 1874.³¹ The total sum was secured with funds from the PWLB (borrowed at 3.5% interest), but was spent only in a piecemeal fashion on main sewers and a few extensions (e.g. along South Lane and Stockerston Road), as well as some outfall work. The LGB was concerned at the increasing cost,³² and the PWLB was slow to process the loan.

In January 1873 WH Brown, the RSA clerk, tried to persuade the PWLB to agree a loan over fifty years instead of thirty, still at 3.5%. The Board was not sympathetic: Treasury-driven retrenchment was starting to bite.³³ Further delays followed; Brown

²⁸ TNA MH12/9814: John L Pateman to LGB 2 May 1872.

²⁹ Ibid: Letter from Barnard Smith to LGB 16 March 1872.

³⁰ Field, Rogers: *Report to the Sanitary Authority* 6 January 1876 p. 2.

³¹ Rawlinson: *Reports* p. 7.

³² TNA MH12/9814 WH Brown to LGB 14 November 1872.

³³ Ibid: LGB to WH Brown 21 January 1873. Poor law retrenchment policy would have been an

wrote again in March,³⁴ and was told that the LGB could not tell the PWLB how to conduct its business.

Meanwhile the guardians had repeatedly asked for guidance about good practice, and about the extent of their powers and status under the new Act. The LGB answered a whole series of queries between August and December 1872 about what could be delegated to sub-committees, the keeping of accounts, the loans already agreed, the discharge of debts incurred by the former sanitary authority, the terms of their clerk's appointment, the type of person they were expected to appoint as the new inspector of nuisances and MOH, and even about such detailed issues as the disinfection of workhouse clothing and bedding.

Wales and the RSA then presented the Board in August 1872 with the first of a number of requests for the guardians to be given the status of Urban Sanitary Authority (USA).³⁵ As a RSA, under the new Act they had powers over water supply, sewerage and drainage, nuisances and hospitals and cemeteries, but not over town improvements (e.g. streets and markets), lighting, and the regulation of traffic; they would also complain repeatedly in the events to come that they had insufficient power to maintain and cleanse streets. USA status would also have given them the power to levy a 'general district rate' on agricultural land, to pay for increased responsibilities.³⁶ There was further correspondence on this issue in October 1873, at

additional factor militating against higher spending. See also Bellamy, Christine: *Administering Central-Local Relations, 1871-1919: The Local Government Board in its Fiscal and Cultural Context* (Manchester, 1988) pp. 29-41, and pp. 79-94.

³⁴ Ibid: WH Brown to LGB 10 March 1873.

³⁵ Ibid: Wales to LGB 21 August 1872.

³⁶ Wright, RS, and Hobhouse, Henry: *An Outline of Local Government and Local Taxation in England & Wales* (1884) pp. 29-31. This rate would have been at 25% of the land's rateable value, to allow for the fact that agricultural land would derive less direct benefit from town improvements.

which stage the LGB believed that Uppingham was too small for such status – although it asked for a plan of the union boundaries.³⁷

Barnard Smith (as chairman of the new RSA) struggled to keep control of its administrative costs. In May 1873 the District Auditor (Robert White) recommended that the union needed an additional collector of rates; in a note to the LGB he stated:

Seeing the great improvements which have been effected in this Union owing as I believe mainly to the constant supervisions, untiring energy and good judgement of the chairman, I should think it unwise as well as ungracious to press the proposed appointment against his wishes – although I confess my own opinion of the desirability of such an appointment remains unaltered.³⁸

He may well have been correct in his view that the RSA's workload was running ahead of its resources. The clerk (William Brown) complained soon afterwards that pressure of work had caused him to submit land returns late; the LGB retorted with concerns about inadequate accounts records.³⁹

1874 brought little respite for the LGB. Its advice was sought over further audit problems, and over procedures for the appointment of a new master of the workhouse. Brown had to approach the PWLB again for yet another £400 repayable over 30 years⁴⁰ – this time for a dry earth storing shed which the inspector stated was 'virtually part of the sewage works'. Again an estimate had proved over-optimistic, and Brown had to assure the LGB that ratepayers in the other parishes would not be

³⁷ TNA MH12/9815: LGB internal memorandum 24 October 1873.

³⁸ Ibid: White to LGB 8 June 1873.

³⁹ Ibid: LGB to WH Brown 24 May 1875.

⁴⁰ Ibid: Brown to LGB 1 January 1874.

affected. Only two or three ratepayers turned up to object when the inspector came down to see things for himself,⁴¹ but it led to further requests from London for a breakdown of expenses.⁴²

Brown was conscientious but very demanding. There was a further stream of queries to the LGB about the salaries of a number of union officials and various audit matters, and about how far paupers' children could be made to travel to school.⁴³ The LGB also agreed a £2 payment to a local doctor following his attendance at a difficult birth at the workhouse.⁴⁴ By late May the guardians were again pressing for urban authority status – quoting a variety of earlier legislation as well as precedents elsewhere.⁴⁵

Further research by Brown led to a long petition in July,⁴⁶ citing the need for stronger powers over offensive trades, slaughterhouses, rubbish clearance, the use of the market place, the keeping of animals and (significantly in the light of later events) the cleansing of footways and pavements. The guardians requested powers over the whole parish and not just the town itself; the LGB replied agreeing to an enquiry on October 6th; posters advertising it were to be attached to the doors of all Uppingham's churches and chapels.

Once again only two ratepayers (other than the RSA members themselves) turned up; the Board recommended that urban status should *not* be granted,⁴⁷ although certain

⁴¹ Ibid: Inspector's report to LGB 10 April 1874.

⁴² Ibid: LGB to Brown 20 March 1874.

⁴³ Ibid: Brown to LGB 14 March 1874: The Board agreed to a three-mile maximum.

⁴⁴ Ibid: Brown to LGB 18 December 1874.

⁴⁵ Ibid: RSA to LGB 22 May 1874. For example, West Ham in the previous year.

⁴⁶ Ibid: Brown to LGB 6 July 1874.

⁴⁷ Ibid: LGB to Brown November 1874. Precise date not known, but the LGB announced its decision to Brown on 11 December.

equivalent powers would be given in specific areas. Brown acknowledged this reply on November 12th, and proceeded to draw up a draft of revised bye-laws on the issues already listed – and on minimum space and construction standards for future new housing, the drainage of new streets and any upgrading of the present sanitary facilities.⁴⁸ These included detailed requirements on ventilation, foundation footings, damp courses and waste water drainage.

The proposed bye-laws were submitted to the LGB early in 1875, but no reply had been received by October 21st when typhoid broke out in the school and Haviland wrote to the LGB:

I am at present much engaged in the investigation of a serious outbreak of typhoid fever in the school at Uppingham, and I find that the byelaws of the Urban Authority have not yet been returned approved. I take the liberty of asking you to expedite this matter as it is highly desirable that the said Authority should be able to exercise all the power it possesses.⁴⁹

2) EXTREMES OF WEATHER 1875-6

1875 was a year of weather extremes in England, with unusually large sharp variations of temperature and a great deal of rain. Sharp frosts at the beginning of the year caused new cracks in sewer drains and cesspits, and deepened existing ones. This damage would not immediately show up, for the spring quarter of the year was one of the warmest and driest for nearly half a century.⁵⁰ Dramatic rainfalls occurred in early

⁴⁸ Ibid: Brown to LGB 16 August 1875.

⁴⁹ Ibid: Haviland letter to LGB 21 October 1875.

⁵⁰ UA: Haviland's notes.

June - over eight times the normal level for that month⁵¹ - making the town a sea of mud. Temperatures plunged again on June 11th, ushering in an early summer cold snap. This lasted right through to August, when six weeks of very warm weather set in.

Autumn was a time notorious for typhoid outbreaks all over the country – especially when the weather was both mild and wet.⁵² In late September 1875 the rains and mud returned with a vengeance. This torrentially wet period caused a sharp jump in deaths amongst the elderly right across the land.⁵³ There was then a period of bitterly cold winds from November 20th to December 16th. By the time the mild weather returned just before Christmas, the school had long broken up.⁵⁴

The pattern of extremes would continue through the first three months of 1876.⁵⁵ The two wet periods of the year caused annual rainfall at Rockingham castle, a few miles to the south, of 37.4 inches. This was nearly twice that of the two previous years, and the highest for at least a decade – figures confirmed by Sir John Fludyer who kept records at Ayston Hall a mile to the north.⁵⁶ There was a classic pattern of wet weather with typhoid appearance and re-appearance in Uppingham during these months.

⁵¹ *USM* 1884: article on rainfall at Uppingham for the ten years 1874-83.

⁵² Hart, Ernest: *Waterborne Typhoid: A Historic Summary of Local Outbreaks in Great Britain and Ireland 1853-1893* (1897) p. 4.

⁵³ *BMJ* 5 Feb 1876.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*: Registrar-General's Quarterly Bulletins.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*: 6 May 1876.

⁵⁶ UA: Single printed sheet document of rainfall statistics: unsigned.

3) SPRING AND SUMMER 1875

Early in February 1875 Thring recorded in his diary that there was ‘much illness in the town – scarlet fever. This is anxious work. I fear we shall not escape. Most certainly in former days this perpetual fear of epidemics was not on schools as it is now...’ A few days later, on February 8th, he expressed the same worries: ‘We have sent in a memorial to the guardians requesting them to have the water analysed with a view to getting a proper supply for the town’. He no doubt recalled an earlier diphtheria outbreak in 1861,⁵⁷ and it was only a few months since ‘the sanitary inspector had told [him] that the town was in an uproar because he had taken a private house in which to treat cases of measles.’⁵⁸

He met the local inspector on February 9th and the masters sent a petition to the RSA,⁵⁹ drawing its attention to the scarlet fever and the recurring presence of measles. The school also expressed concern about well water pollution both from house cesspits and from local animals: ‘after every heavy rain the contamination from the various accumulations of filth on the soil is apparent in many wells...’ It pointed out that Professor Attfield of the Pharmacological Society of London had analysed several samples (presumably on the School’s initiative), finding that the water was pure on entry into the town but became speedily contaminated thereafter. A mains supply was essential.

⁵⁷ Parkin, GR, (ed): *Edward Thring, Headmaster of Uppingham School: Life, Diary and Letters* Vol. 2 p. 3. Thring was right to be worried; diphtheria was frequently fatal amongst children. See appendix 4 section 2 for this, and for details of the 1861 outbreak.

⁵⁸ Medical Research Council Report: *Epidemics in Schools: An Analysis of the Data collected during the First Five Years of a Statistical Inquiry by the School Epidemics Committee* (HMSO, 1938) pp. 31-32.

⁵⁹ TNA MH12/9815: Petition to LGB 9 February 1875.

By February 13th there had been four deaths from scarlet fever in the town in ten days. Thring wrote of 'anxious work', but also that:

God has given me back some of the old elastic work power. In spite of this... worry etc, I feel so full of life and spirits that I hardly know myself. I can do ten times as much as I have been able to do for years, and I feel cheery in proportion.⁶⁰

A fortnight later however he was dejected again:

Received an anonymous letter yesterday denouncing the filthy state of the town, and in a half-sneering, half-real way telling me to look to it, as no one else would. But I don't see how it can be done. The law helps us very little, and like most weak laws is a better instrument of oppression than of help.⁶¹

The scarlet fever outbreak had also attracted Haviland's attention. We do not know whether he visited the town at that point; it seems more likely that he received a report from the local inspector, Frederick James. Haviland decided that the town infants' school was probably the source, and he recommended closing it temporarily for thorough disinfection.⁶² Thring kept up the pressure for further investigation, but little had been done elsewhere in the town to prevent a recurrence before the summer term began on April 5th – although the RSA agreed to send twelve well water samples

⁶⁰ Ibid: Robert Hayes, Registrar's memorandum to LGB 13 February 1875.

⁶¹ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 4: Thring's diary 28 February 1875.

⁶² *Mercury* 12 February 1875.

from various parts of the town to Dr Thudicum of the Medical Department of the Privy Council.⁶³

Thudicum analysed them – and reported in July that all except one of them were heavily contaminated with animal or human sewage, and that the water was ‘excessively hard and very unsuitable for domestic purposes. If Uppingham could obtain conducted soft water, it would do well to close up wells 2-12’.⁶⁴ It seems that the RSA, which made no response to this, was already afraid of ratepayer anger if it moved too fast.⁶⁵

Meanwhile, on June 7th a pupil in the Lower School (Hawke junior, aged 9) wrote home that he had a sore throat. His father was ill at the time and his mother could not leave, but she wrote to Mrs Hodgkinson (the housemaster’s wife), asking her to see the boy at once. Although it seemed to be only a cold (she hoped), it might be the beginning of a fever. Mrs Hodgkinson replied reassuringly that master Hawke was improving and now playing with other boys again, but her husband wrote again on June 17th and 19th with news of stomach problems and gastric symptoms.

Lady Hawke came to visit her son on June 21st, and quickly realized how grave his condition was. She summoned Dr Paley, a specialist from Peterborough. Young Hawke rallied, but then suddenly collapsed and died on the evening of June 24th, the day after the school had broken up for the summer. His death was certified on June 28th by Dr Bell as caused by enteric (typhoid) fever. Bell was later to be accused of

⁶³ JH Thudicum 1829-1901: Director of the Chemical and Pathological Laboratory, St Thomas’s Hospital.

⁶⁴ UA: letter to Haviland 12 July 1875.

⁶⁵ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 4: Thring’s diary 28 February 1875.

having failed to recognize the true cause of death until he consulted a colleague, a slur which he rejected as being ‘utterly at variance with the truth’.⁶⁶

Although running legally separate institutions,⁶⁷ Thring and Hodgkinson collaborated closely. It would be surprising if Dr Bell was not also consulted, but they did not formally notify the RSA. They were under no obligation to do so,⁶⁸ and they probably underestimated the danger which typhoid posed, hoping that it was an isolated case and that the source of the fever would vanish over the summer holidays – although Hodgkinson himself was ill for several weeks over the summer,⁶⁹ and it is possible that he too had typhoid symptoms. He would later admit:

I have to plead to ignorance of the nature and origin of typhoid fever. During my life of twenty years ... I had never had a case of this fever in my house, nor even seen one. There was nothing in the early stages of the disease to awaken anxiety in the mind of one inexperienced in the subtle forms it assumes.⁷⁰

All this would explain later criticisms levelled at the School that nothing had been done to investigate the origin of the outbreak for nearly four months after Hawke’s

⁶⁶ UA: Bell, Thomas: *Letterbook 1876-1904*: Bell to Dr Paley 29 January 1876. Typhoid diagnosis could be very difficult. See Hardy, Anne: *The Epidemic Streets: Infectious Disease and the Rise of Preventive Medicine 1856-1900* (Oxford, 1993) pp. 152-153.

⁶⁷ Matthews, Bryan: *By God’s Grace: A History of Uppingham School* (Maidstone, 1984) p. 109.

⁶⁸ This was fourteen years before the Infectious Diseases Notification Act 1889: see ch. 3 section 5.

⁶⁹ Haviland, Alfred: *Report on the late outbreak of Enteric Fever in Archdeacon Johnson’s School, Uppingham, Rutland June-November 1875* p. 3, confirmed in UA: Hodgkinson, RJ: *Remarks on Mr Haviland’s Report on the Visitation of Fever in the School and Town of Uppingham* 10 February 1876 p. 6.

⁷⁰ Hodgkinson: *Remarks* p. 1.

death, until circumstances forced it to do so in October.⁷¹ Possibly the School also feared that unfavourable coverage in the press might lead to a drop in numbers.

4) THE AUTUMN TERM BEGINS

On September 2nd, just before the new term began, a local plumber, Mr Chapman (who lived in the High Street just a short distance away), was summoned by Hodgkinson to the Lower School. According to Haviland's later report (a version of the event hotly disputed by both Hodgkinson and Thring himself), Chapman:

... was called in to remedy an obstruction in the flow of sewage from the boys' trough closets into an unventilated cesspit. The corner of the chamber in which the obstruction was supposed to exist being dark, a lighted candle was used, and almost immediately after it had been lowered on a level with the junction where an opening had been made, a tremendous explosion took place, the sewer gases igniting, passing up to the ceiling like a streak of lightning, and at the same time burning the whiskers, eyebrows and hair of Mr Chapman.⁷²

Coincidentally, this event came only a week after the *Lancet* had carried a report of typhoid amongst 'men exposed to sewer gas'.⁷³ Only three weeks later (with term now well under way), a thirteen year-old boy, Kettlewell, was taken ill with fever on September 21st, again in the Lower School. He was confirmed a day later by Dr Bell to be suffering from typhoid. Another case, again in the Lower School (Hastings major), followed on September 28th and there were two more on October 1st. We do

⁷¹ Haviland: *Report* p. 3 and p. 43.

⁷² *Ibid* p 17.

⁷³ *Lancet* 28 August 1875.

not know exactly when Thring was told, but on a day which he came to speak of as 'that fatal fourth of October', he recorded in his diary: 'Two or three cases of low fever in the school. This begins to make me anxious.'⁷⁴

On Thursday October 7th another boy, Richardson, developed symptoms – a serious case from the start, and one which was to prove fatal.⁷⁵ Dr Bell was now very fully involved; over the next five days he saw up to ten other Lower School boys - along with eight boys from other school houses, and eleven other adults and children (mostly members of staff families or house servants). Some had very indeterminate symptoms, but Bell was fairly certain that at least two of those seen were also typhoid cases.⁷⁶

Only now (presumably after advice from Bell) were boys from the Lower School sent to the sanatorium rather than being cared for within the house. They had no automatic right of access to sanatorium facilities. It might have been argued that it was better to confine the victims to their own living quarters, rather than sending them to a building which was visited daily by older pupils from all the school houses and where they might pick up, or spread, this and other infections.

5) THE OLD BOYS' MATCH: OCTOBER 9th

The school was now facing a deepening crisis, and this seemed to be symbolised by the weather on Saturday October 9th, when a football match took place between the pupils and an invitation XV selected by one of the masters. There had been torrential

⁷⁴ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 4: Thring's diary 9 October 1875.

⁷⁵ Haviland: *Report* p. 4.

⁷⁶ UA: List of cases: 15 September – 7 November 1875.

rain for much of the previous three days;⁷⁷ it was an exceptionally wet autumn. At lunchtime the rain began again. The *USM*'s correspondent braved the downpour to go in search of the captain of football, whose boarding house was some distance to the south of the main part of the school on the Rockingham Road. When asked whether the match would go ahead, the latter replied: 'We play through thunder and lightning.'⁷⁸

Having returned to his own house to get changed, the writer set off into 'the pitiless rain'. Eventually the game began – and a sizeable crowd of spectators braved the elements to watch. Afterwards:

...hot fires, hot water, hot coffee and alcohol in more than one shape were brought to bear on the soaking effects of the rain; and so well did they do their work that only one member of the Fifteen, we believe, suffered from the game; and he got nothing but a cold.

Far from abating, the rain got heavier and continued for the rest of the day and the greater part of the night. The town was awash with mud and

the well-known malaria called the church-yard smell, which is almost as offensive as disinfecting powder, and must be a perpetual reproach to all antecremationists (sic), had thoroughly pervaded the atmosphere of the valley.

After the game, the teams dispersed to various boarding houses all over the town.

⁷⁷ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 5: Thring's diary 6-10 October 1875.

⁷⁸ *USM* Autumn 1875.

We do not know whether or not Thring turned out on the touchline. He had been in post for over two decades, so he would have known all the members of the visiting team; he would surely have been there in normal times. He had plenty to worry about, with illness in several boarding houses and a number of private properties.

On the Wednesday before the match, the weather had improved and he had hoped a dry spell would chase the illness away. He had recorded his fears in his diary on the Thursday about the condition of the ailing children of two members of staff: 'All this presses very heavily and makes one nervous about one's own children too.' A day later he had written: 'The bell tolled this morning [in the town], and I was in great fear, but a man had died in the union [workhouse]. I very much fear that we shall not escape death'.⁷⁹ Six boys had been admitted to the school sanatorium on the day of the match - joining seven others who had been there for between one and five days.

The day of the match also saw the arrival of a young man who was to become a chance casualty of the typhoid outbreak.⁸⁰ Later on Saturday evening a coach drew up outside the Falcon Hotel in the market place. It had met the train at Manton station and had then come the few miles over to Uppingham. A seventeen year-old passenger stepped down from it. We do not know his name, but he had come all the way from Southampton, having agreed to take up work as a page-boy in the Lower School.

The school was later to claim that he was offered his fare back to Southampton but chose to stay.⁸¹ By contrast, Haviland claimed that the boy replied: 'If I had known, I

⁷⁹ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 5: Thring's diary 8 October 1875.

⁸⁰ Haviland: *Report* p. 28.

⁸¹ Hodgkinson: *Remarks* pp. 2-3.

would not have come; and if I had money in my pocket, I would go back again.’

Either way, just over three weeks later he would be dead.⁸²

6) OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER 1875

On Sunday October 10th, the day after the match, the chapel service raised Thring’s spirits,⁸³ but there was a steady stream of new cases in the days which followed: a few milder ones in the town, but mostly in the School. There were five in West Deyne, two doors to the east of the Lower School – all involving boys aged thirteen to sixteen⁸⁴, as well as young Cecil Mullins, the housemaster’s son. The baby son of Paul David (the director of music, who lived in a neighbouring house)⁸⁵ was also gravely ill. At the Lower School, Hastings’ younger brother had gone down with the disease.

More worrying still was the case of Stephen Nash, aged 14 of Redgate – a house on London Road nearly half a mile from the other affected ones. The disease appeared to be spreading, as boys from the various houses came into contact with one another in school – or perhaps there was an outside source over which the School could have no control. Nash had complained of feeling faint during singing practice; Dr Bell saw him that evening and again two days later.⁸⁶ Thring met Nash’s parents when they came to visit their son in the sanatorium, and described them as ‘kind and sensible’.

⁸² Haviland: *Report* p. 28.

⁸³ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 5: Thring’s diary (Sunday) 10 October 1876. ‘The rest from work and the chapel is always a blessing’.

⁸⁴ *Ibid* p. 4.

⁸⁵ Wright’s *Directory* 1880. See also 1871 census RG10 3301-2..

⁸⁶ Haviland: *Report*: p. 4.

Alarm began to spread amongst pupils and staff. Rumours started to reach parents. A number of them reacted with aggression or panic, demanding action and then starting to withdraw their children. Some arrived at the school: at least two mothers and one father were at the bedsides of more serious cases.⁸⁷ It is likely that even the mildest cold symptoms amongst boys would cause alarm to them and their friends – and that some imagined they were ill, as this anxiety grew. Local rumour soon put the number of cases at nearly 40, although Dr Bell – to whom Thring remained staunchly loyal – insisted publicly at this stage that it was probably only just over a dozen.⁸⁸

On Monday October 11th Wensley Jacob – Liverpool businessman, father of two pupils and a school trustee – contacted Thring. Six other parents in that city, two of whom were doctors, had formed a deputation to see Jacob; they were demanding that the school summon the MOH.⁸⁹ The next day a letter arrived from Dr Grimsdale, another Liverpool parent, ‘speaking in the name of many parents in a kind spirit, but also in an imperious one’. The rumour of 40 cases was racing around Merseyside.

Thring faced a very difficult decision. If he closed the school and sent his pupils to their homes all over the country, he risked spreading the infection. He might accelerate the panic – with dire consequences for Uppingham School’s reputation and future. It might never reopen. But if he kept it in session and the epidemic grew, he risked being accused of complacency and secrecy, and of putting the school’s and his own interests ahead of those of his pupils. In the long run this might prove even more damaging. As headmaster it was his main responsibility to prevent a sense of ever-deepening crisis, amongst staff, pupils and parents. He felt on balance that he needed

⁸⁷ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 5: Thring’s diary 10 October 1875.

⁸⁸ Ibid: Thring’s diary 14 October 1875.

⁸⁹ Ibid: Thring’s diary 13 October 1875.

to keep school life going on as normally as possible, even if some of his housemasters and other staff showed signs of panic, or faced personal tragedy within their own families. He also needed to summon up the right mix of assertiveness and tact in dealing with an RSA which he believed increasingly to be complacent and supine.

On the Tuesday October 12th Thring, backed by Mullins, the West Deyne housemaster who was facing increasing cases amongst his own house and watching his own little son deteriorate, decided that they had no alternative but to ask for help from Haviland.⁹⁰ There is no record of Bell's attitude to this. Thring wrote asking Haviland to come over urgently from Northampton to 'test and examine' the drainage system and water supply of all the houses. Out of a sense of courtesy or possibly because he saw it as tactically sensible to adopt such a tone, he added:

If you cannot come yourself, perhaps you would kindly telegraph to me, as it is no use to us to have the inspection by any man whose name will not carry respect and conviction, not only in this immediate neighbourhood, but also in other parts of England amongst the parents of the boys, in the great towns especially...⁹¹

But the pressures continued to mount:

I had scarcely finished breakfast when two mothers came in to get an arrangement made at [the sanatorium]; then the masters' meeting; then in school an interview with Bell about [sanatorium] arrangements.

⁹⁰ UA: Rigby manuscript ch. 20 p. 3.

⁹¹ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 7: Letter to Haviland c7 October 1875.

He had meetings with housemasters and other staff in and around the School:

...met Christian [housemaster of Redgate], coming back, who said Nash was [thought] to be dying, Mullins had already told me that there was no hope for his [own] little boy; wrote part of another letter, went to dinner, lay down, but was sent for by poor Mullins. I found him quite perplexed about his house, overdone both in body and mind...⁹²

In an attempt to work off the pressure, Thring went for an hour's walk with his youngest daughter, Grace, and then spent time praying. Briefly there was hope that Nash and Cecil Mullins might be rallying. But by Wednesday things were bad again – and now Hodgkinson needed support: 'driven out of his wits by the calamity and fuss. I very much fear that he will not stand it...'⁹³

Thring decided that he would not send the pupils home, and he spent part of Thursday morning (October 14th) addressing his staff:

...under no conceivable circumstances should I break up the School; that it was a great injustice and wrong to many forcing them to have their boys home; that, in the first instance, when a house was at all got hold of by illness, I should have parents written to, to be told the fact, but strongly dissuade the removal of the boys; then if it spread I should make removal optional, and if it got very bad should throw the responsibility of keeping them here on the

⁹² Ibid: Thring's diary 12 October 1875.

⁹³ Ibid: Thring's diary 12 October 1875.

parents. That we should always stay so long as there were any boys to teach and keep them.

He emphasised the dispersed nature of the school's layout, with houses all over the town:

I said we were not in a big barrack with one common establishment, but each with his own house and separate arrangements, which renders it quite unnecessary to break up the school. I also told them I should not permit the school to be overhauled by any but a competent and true authority.⁹⁴

We do not know when the guardians individually became aware of the full extent of the crisis, but in a community as small as Uppingham they must by now have known that the situation was bad and growing worse. Before their weekly Wednesday meeting, Brown (their clerk) had instructed Mr James to investigate; at that meeting James confirmed formally that there were typhoid cases in the School. Keen to be seen to be as proactive as the School, the RSA members decided, like Thring, that this was a matter for Dr Haviland. James was instructed to send a telegram to him: 'Fever in the school houses here; your immediate attendance is requested; a committee will be summoned to meet you; reply by telegram'.⁹⁵

Haviland was elsewhere at the time, but he returned home on Thursday to find these communications from both school and town. He immediately replied that he would

⁹⁴ Ibid: Thring's diary 14 October 1875. Ch. 1 showed that dispersed boarding houses was one of the school's distinctive features.

⁹⁵ Haviland: *Report* p. 6.

come over next morning. There was also a strained meeting between Mr James and Thring, at which accusations of secrecy and inertia were traded. Thring wrote later:

Was not a little amused to hear from him that he [claimed to have] known nothing of any fever in the town until today at the Board. So I may be excused for having known nothing [about illness in the school]...⁹⁶

Haviland's impending arrival, and further demands for information from Liverpool, weighed heavily on Thring. He was particularly concerned about the Lower School: 'I really fear it will send poor Hodgkinson into his grave...'

On Friday morning Haviland arrived from Seaton station at 11am to begin enquiries⁹⁷ - around the time that the disease claimed four year-old Cecil Mullins, who died at West Deyne. Another telegram came from Liverpool, demanding to know whether or not Haviland had started his investigations. 'When will it end?' wrote Thring in his diary. 'I am myself very tired and done up...all one's feelings of joy in doing one's best, and the happy sense of unselfish working and pouring out of liberal free life on one's work is so utterly destroyed...'⁹⁸ The achievements of two and a half decades might now 'melt like the snow of spring'.⁹⁹

Thring attended Cecil Mullins' funeral on Saturday October 16th. Sunday brought the death of the first Uppingham pupil (Richardson). Nash from the Lower School

⁹⁶ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 8: Thring's diary 13 October 1875.

⁹⁷ Haviland: *Report* p. 6.

⁹⁸ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 9: Thring's diary 14 October 1875.

⁹⁹ UA: Thring: *Borth Commemoration Sermon* 1880.

followed on October 21st and Oldham (another Lower School pupil, who had been in the sanatorium for only 24 hours) on October 23rd.

The list of those in (or connected with) the school who were affected by fever of varying degrees of severity did indeed come eventually to over 40. It included no fewer than 17 from the Lower School, and 9 from West Deyne.¹⁰⁰ Six different Upper school houses were affected. The sanatorium list includes crosses against the names of four marked as ‘an undoubted case of typhoid’ (although we cannot be sure when these crosses were included).¹⁰¹ Dr Bell also recorded that twelve of his patients in the town (as opposed to the school) showed similar fever symptoms during September and October. They included two children of John Hawthorn, (the bookseller) and HH Stephenson (the school’s cricket professional), but none of these town cases were serious, and all would recover.

7) THRING AND HAVILAND

We do not know whether Thring and Haviland had ever met before. It is likely that Thring was more than keen to enlist his support; Haviland was well-placed to put pressure on the RSA, and possessed the necessary experience and authority to call on the LGB to add its weight if necessary. This explains why Thring’s telegram asking Haviland to come over from Northampton had laid emphasis on the latter’s professional expertise.

He met Haviland within an hour of attending Cecil Mullins’ burial in the churchyard on Saturday 16th, barely 150 yards from Thring’s own house. Bell does not seem to

¹⁰⁰ Matthews: *By God’s Grace* p 101. Matthews states that the total was 46.

¹⁰¹ List in UA.

have been present. At almost exactly the same time a group of angry parents gathered at the Falcon Hotel nearby. Feelings were running high; as another father arrived late for the meeting, those already there asked him whether he had come 'to take his boy out of the hands of these murderers'. When Thring heard about it later, he commented ruefully: 'Nice for poor old Hodgkinson, whose whole life has been bound up in the house and boys; nice for me too, for I am murderer No.1'.¹⁰²

Haviland had wasted no time in looking around the town as well as the School. He was initially furious with the Authority when he discovered that the problems with the privies at the infants' school had still not been rectified, eight months after he had pointed them out.¹⁰³ At this stage, although already convinced that this time the typhoid had originated in the Lower School,¹⁰⁴ he advised that it was quite safe for the school as a whole to continue. Thring, who (like many) was probably coming across public health officialdom for the first time, found Haviland's manner hard to take, and was also worried that he might be listening too much to alarmist rumour about the spiralling number of cases:

I confess that my blood rather boiled when I heard this man deliver an ex cathedra statement, as if all he said was gospel on a question where there was so much to be considered.... Had he decided otherwise, I don't know what I could have done. It was strange, too, to hear [him] fussing about the lies that had been told and following them up.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 11: Thring's diary 18 October 1875.

¹⁰³ Haviland: *Report* p. 8.

¹⁰⁴ *Times* 5 November 1875.

¹⁰⁵ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 10: Thring's diary 16 October 1875.

A few days later on October 21st, Haviland carried out a thorough inspection of Thring's own boarding house. Thring was more reassured this time: 'I am glad to say there is little to be altered, and that not of much consequence. He also passed both my wells officially as perfectly pure'. This was to be confirmed a week later with the arrival of results of water samples which Thring had sent for analysis to Messrs Savory and Moore in London a few days earlier.

Yet in the days which followed, Haviland's advice was to change a number of times. He sent Thring a telegram on October 22nd saying that in his opinion all boys in infected houses should be sent home,¹⁰⁶ although he subsequently wrote to one housemaster (Christian) that he saw 'no danger whatsoever in allowing pupils to remain: the sanitary arrangements of your house are such as to warrant me in believing that Nash did not contract fever under your roof from any sanitary arrangements in your house'.¹⁰⁷ The fact that Christian's house was one of those furthest from the main part of the school may explain this apparent contradiction.

Unsurprisingly, Thring decided to act on the second message rather than the first; he was very reluctant to disperse the school. He drew up a statement for parents of the guiding principles which would apply in dealing with the crisis. Emphasising again that the School consisted of eleven geographically distinct houses each with their own catering arrangements, he reiterated all the reasons why he was unwilling to send the boys home – although if parents insisted on it, or if the disease became really established in any particular house, he saw no alternative.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid: Thring's diary 22 October 1875.

¹⁰⁷ Letter in UA.

He consulted his two trustee allies, Birley and Jacob, about the statement; their knowledge of the Liverpool parents would be important. They wondered whether other parents might think this statement too dictatorial, but Thring pressed ahead and later claimed that parents had praised it.¹⁰⁸ He also received a letter from Dr Christopher Childs, an old Uppinghamian who had recently qualified from St George's Hospital in London, offering his services to the school.¹⁰⁹ Childs had graduated from Oxford some years earlier with first class honours in science, and had been a very successful footballer and athlete while at the School.

Thring decided to take him on to the staff as science master and sanitary officer. Recruiting new, additional staff at a time when many people were gloomy about the school's future would reassure parents and staff, and it would go down well with the Old Uppinghamians. This appointment might also relieve the pressures on Dr Bell – although Thring failed to anticipate what a source of friction it would prove to be when Bell later started to fear that his own position and income were threatened by Childs's presence.

8) THE SANITARY AUTHORITY

We can only speculate about precisely what determined the RSA's action in these weeks. Some of its members were at best lukewarm towards Thring and the School (for reasons already identified), and initially they would not have been overwhelmed with regret at his discomfiture. Even when the crisis deepened, and having joined the call for Haviland to investigate, it made sense in many ways to await the outcome of his findings. The RSA lacked the technical and medical expertise to ensure that any

¹⁰⁸ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 12: Thring's diary 23 October 1875.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid: Thring's diary 27 October 1875.

action in advance of Haviland's recommendations would be cost-effective (or, indeed, effective at all), and it is unlikely that they had any contingency funding for a crisis of this magnitude.

As the full extent and implications of the epidemic sank in, however, the RSA realised the importance of giving the impression of decisiveness and of being in control.

Thring firmly believed that it was keen to place the blame firmly on the school,¹¹⁰ and at an early stage it pronounced that wells in one boarding house on the edge of the town (Redgate) were quite pure, only to have chemical analysis of samples submitted by Thring to Savory and Moore sent back as 'turbid' and over-heavy in carbon and nitrogen.¹¹¹ On October 27th it served notice on four of the masters to 'remove nuisances arising from their cesspits',¹¹² following initial visits by Haviland.

Thring's irritation at this action was compounded by the reaction of the trustees to this, when they met on October 29th. They declined to get a sanitary expert down to give advice, preferring instead to pass a motion:

...recommending to the headmaster at once to close the school, and that a representation be made to the Sanitary Authority urging them to give every facility for the work pointed out as necessary to be done at the several school houses by the report of the Medical Officer of Health.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ Ibid p.18: Thring's letter to Sir Henry Thring 5 November 1875.

¹¹¹ UA: Letter from Prof. Frankland, early Nov 1875, confirmed by letter to Christian 29 Nov 1875. A decade later, with bacteriology an emergent branch of medical knowledge, the analysis might have been more extensive: see appendix 4, section 1.

¹¹² *Times* 5 November 1875.

¹¹³ UA: Trustees' Minute Book 29 October 1875.

They would set up a sub-committee to work with the RSA. Thring was particularly scathing about what he saw as this spineless response:

A most bitter disappointment. The trustees with all this great school handed over to them... have appointed a sub-committee to urge the sanitary authorities here (whom we mistrust and despise)... it is very hard to keep down the bitter, sour feeling which this day has once again curdled within one...¹¹⁴

There was no alternative now to announcing that term would end on November 2nd while necessary improvements to the houses were made - even though, with the prospect of the school being closed for at least two months, parents would surely start to consider alternative schools. He was careful to cultivate unity amongst his staff at this critical time. A series of meetings established that, costly though it would be to the housemasters, the houses must be put into a sanitary state in which no-one could find fault with them. Parents were told that the school hoped to re-open “the week after Christmas Day”.¹¹⁵ Thring confessed in his diary:

The last evening, alas! of our maimed school-time. It is strange though, the childish relief I feel at not having to get up for school tomorrow. A true and real relief, however, is the lifting of that fearful weight of the possibility of fresh fever. For the first time for many days I have drawn something like free breath.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 15: Thring's diary 29 October 1875.

¹¹⁵ UA: Notice to parents October 1875.

¹¹⁶ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 15: Thring's diary 1 November 1875.

The recriminations between school and town came fully into the open as soon as the boys had gone home. The RSA made public on November 5th its order to Thring and the other masters 'to at once remove the nuisances occasioned by the cesspits'. It then went further: a resolution was unanimously carried that 'serious blame attaches to the masters in whose homes enteric fever originated.' It also criticised Dr Bell for the first time: 'The medical officer of the school was also blamed for not investigating the causes... and reporting the outbreak to the Sanitary Authority... for not attending a meeting of medical practitioners of the town, convened by the MOH....' Finally they decided to commission a notable sanitary engineer, Rogers Field of Westminster, to report on the drainage (both public and private) of the town.¹¹⁷

Thring was deeply angry at this apparent rush to judgement before the evidence had been assembled and assessed:

Wrote to Jacob and Birley, but could give them no information excepting that we were going to be made a scapegoat of. And sure enough they [the RSA] have been and done it. I got tonight such a document, the most wonderful bit of Jack-in-officism. Considering that the Sanitary [Authority] and town generally have steadily resisted all improvement as far as possible these twenty years... and have ignored fever in the town for the last six months, they have had the audacity to attach serious blame to our houses for having had fever; no reasons given, no hearing of the case. It is astonishing.

¹¹⁷ *Lancet* 6 November 1875.

Altogether it is the most insulting thing I ever knew. It is truly laughable, but it is noxious too, as they mean to send it to every parent whose boy has been ill... They think nothing can touch them. The inspector calmly told Guy that if we applied to the London Board, they would only send down the complaint to him, and he had better save himself the trouble. I shall have some difficulty in keeping the masters reasonably quiet under the insult.... Altogether this is a time of humiliation and sackcloth.¹¹⁸

With the RSA apparently intransigent, Thring no doubt feared that Haviland's full report (due within weeks) could well take the RSA's side against the school. A MOH's sympathies might well lie instinctively in that direction, especially if Barnard Smith could convince Haviland that the RSA had been improving the sewerage as fast as it reasonably could. Moreover, it was Haviland's job to protect the health and interests of the whole local population, not just the school. His priorities were likely to be very different from Thring's.

It was at this point that Thring became convinced that he needed to enlist influential support beyond the immediate locality. He could get little sympathy or action from the RSA without it, and for the next few weeks his main aim was to force the LGB itself to become involved.

9) CONCLUSION

Even allowing for the highly-charged description of these events by Thring himself, the narrative of this period does much to support the views of historians about the

¹¹⁸ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 16: Thring's diary 3 November 1875.

ineffectiveness of overlapping local agencies in the years immediately before the passing of the Public Health Acts, as well as the limitations in what RSAs (as opposed to USAs) could require of their local inhabitants. It also demonstrates the difficulty of meeting rising expectations about public health within levels of rate increase which local people would tolerate.

Once typhoid broke out, it is understandable, with no obvious course of action to take over the summer, that Thring had hoped that time would solve the problem. When it did not, events inevitably assumed a momentum of their own which brought the wrath both of worried parents and of the zealous Haviland down upon his head – and fuelled existing tensions (both institutional and personal) between the town and the school.

CHAPTER 5 – WINTER 1875-6

This chapter deals with the period between the breaking up of the school in early November 1875, and the subsequent publication of the various reports commissioned by both the school and the town. It explains how Thring approached the LGB for help, and the Board's tentative response, and the way in which town and school enlisted the support of the medical and national press. Finally it examines the findings of the experts in detail – especially the highly inflammatory findings of Dr Haviland.

1) WINNING INFLUENTIAL HELP

By November 1875 Thring was convinced that he needed to force the LGB to conduct a full enquiry. However, while such a tactic might strengthen the school's position, it risked deepening the antipathy with the town. Indeed, the RSA came to believe that Thring was determined to divert all blame away from himself, by using powerful contacts to whom it did not have access.

The RSA's suspicions seemed to be confirmed when two influential figures emerged to support Thring's case. He was in close touch with his brother, Sir Henry Thring, who had much influence in parliament,¹ and wrote him a letter on November 5th, requesting:

If you can get to Sclater Booth and the Central Board [i.e. the LGB], it is simply all in all to me... You know well I have given everything to trying to make schools better and improve boy-life. Most of our arrangements here are

¹ Sir Henry (1st Baron) Thring 1818-1907: Parliamentary Counsel 1868-86.

very good, and if it rested with us the few things wanting could be set in order without difficulty. But it does not rest with us. The town is at fault.

During all these years at intervals we have been trying to get improvements set on foot, and these efforts have been resisted and resented bitterly by those who are now supreme authorities over us. Unless we can get the central authority turned on, it is pretty well ruin... The town is trying to make the school its scapegoat, for the double purpose of hiding past mismanagement and preventing present outlay and exposure...

Uppingham may forget but cannot forgive, that it exists mainly by the school... The Authority... cannot act with vigour enough, and (even) if it could do so now, the row and panic amongst our parents is so great that it would not help us much after the lies and exaggerations that have been set going... You government men have no conception of local tyranny.²

Three days later he contacted Sir Henry again: 'I want nothing but fair play and no favour. Nor do my masters; they are honest and hard-working, and ready to do anything that is judged right'. Another letter went to one of his younger brothers (Revd Godfrey Thring): 'I am neither in a funk, nor cast down. I shall stand by my guns, and if knocked over, will begin again. I don't mean by begin again, try headmastership. The workhouse is open before that'.³ On receiving this second letter,

² Parkin, GR, (ed): *Edward Thring, Headmaster of Uppingham School: Life, Diary and Letters* (1898) Vol. 2 pp. 18-19: Thring to Sir Henry Thring 5 November 1875.

³ Ibid: p. 20: Thring to Revd. Godfrey Thring 8 November 1875.

Sir Henry went to visit the LGB at once. It now assured him that 'Government would do everything it could'.⁴

The second important contact was Sir Charles Adderley, who was prepared to use his extensive political contacts.⁵ Adderley wrote to John Lambert of the LGB on November 15th, from his London house in Eaton Place. He pointed out that he was a large local landowner; there had been some improvements in the town in previous years but, he claimed, nothing like enough. He painted a bleak picture of a town whose sewers were inadequate and incomplete, of leaking cesspools and 'some filthy manure yards and pigstyes in the town, which must to a certain extent pollute the wells'.⁶ The RSA needed greater powers to insist on their removal, although he also alleged that it had not made enough use of the byelaws which already existed.

Adderley believed that relations between the RSA and the school had deteriorated too far for much action to be initiated locally. He called for a government enquiry, lest good ratepayers' money was poured after bad, for it would be no use adding piecemeal to an incomplete sewer system; the current ones needed to be re-laid more deeply. In his opinion these issues were more important than a new water supply, even though the wells were suspect. It is possible, having resisted the sewage farm development on his own land a few years earlier, that he was now keen to avoid the prospect of being pressurised to give other land for a water works.

⁴ Ibid: p. 20: Thring's diary 9 November 1875.

⁵ See ch. 2 section 1.

⁶ PRO/TNA MH12/9815: Adderley to LGB 15 November 1875.

Between them Henry Thring and Adderley succeeded in the quest for a LGB enquiry, and Thring was able to write to the *Times* to that effect on November 16th. A trip to London to confer with Henry Thring and Adderley did him a power of good:

On Monday I came back, having been put in another world by this day's absence – lifted clear out of the old rut. And set with a stronger, clearer faith, on higher ground... Thus ended a great day for me. The local tyranny is now shut up for a time... Altogether I feel a great cloud rolled away, and begin to see light and breathe freely. How wonderful it is how God has sent me the right men at the right time to deliver me... I thank God for my life and work.⁷

He could now concentrate on other ways of maintaining the momentum. It was essential to put the RSA on the defensive, and to bombard them with initiatives; the school must be seen to be the party most actively addressing the problems. He and the masters engaged Mr Alfred Tarbotton, a Nottingham engineer to recommend improvements to drainage in the houses. In a letter to Christian on December 4th Tarbotton urged the housemasters, on whom most of the expense would fall, not to drag their feet over putting these measures in place.⁸ Thring wrote to some of them on the same day, reinforcing the message.⁹

He was now determined to address not just the drainage question but the water supply as well. Two separate analyses (one in the spring and another in the autumn) had highlighted the contamination of the wells. From early November he was at work on

⁷ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 21: Thring's diary 16 November 1875.

⁸ UA: Tarbotton to Christian: 6 December 1875.

⁹ UA: Thring to Christian 4 December 1875, written from an address in Hyde Park, London.

plans to spend £100 on trial borings for a new water supply.¹⁰ A private water company might well be the best means to carry it out, although such independent action would hardly endear the school to the RSA. Hodding and Beevor, a firm of Worksop solicitors, were consulted; they advised that an act of parliament should be sought during the next session to permit such a company,¹¹ and the RSA responded predictably by giving notice of opposition “merely to protect our own interests and those of the ratepayers”¹². This notwithstanding, a week before Christmas the solicitors sent out the first draft prospectus to Christian and the other masters, and trial borings started.¹³

2) LOBBYING THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD

Even though the battle for an enquiry by the LGB had been won, an analysis of its papers during November shows that this outcome could not have been taken for granted. The LGB’s senior officials differed amongst themselves over the wisdom of becoming involved. This is not surprising, given the internal tensions within the Board itself and the remorseless lobbying in this period by both town and school. The RSA had been every bit as intent as the school on winning the LGB’s support. It had also received a warning from Haviland very soon after his arrival in Uppingham in October, that the epidemic looked serious, and supporting the Authority’s concern for a speedy decision over stronger bye-laws.¹⁴

¹⁰ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 21: Thring’s diary 11 November 1875.

¹¹ UA: Note of RSA meeting 15 December 1875.

¹² UA: Smith, Barnard: *The Late Visitation of Typhoid Fever in the School and Town of Uppingham. A Statement of the Action of the Sanitary Committee by the Chairman 19 Jan 1876* p. 9.

¹³ UA: Note from Hodding and Beevor 14 December 1875.

¹⁴ TNA MH12/9815: Haviland to LGB 21 October 1875.

The pressure exerted on the LGB by the school in particular was unrelenting. Thring contacted it on November 1st. His allies amongst the school trustees, Birley and Jacob, were concerned that Haviland might not be able to give Uppingham his undivided attention, and they urged Thring to seek assurances that the LGB would intervene as necessary. Thring made an approach, but one phrase in his letter made the Board wary. The words: 'We recommend you to throw on the London authority the responsibility of any future outbreak' were highlighted by a civil servant as a phrase to be treated with caution.¹⁵

Thring also made a personal approach to Sir John Simon - introducing Dr Childs, who would call on him to put the school's case for more urgent action, because the School was worried about 'not satisfying public opinion'.¹⁶ Childs duly appeared, but Simon, sensing that the LGB was in danger of becoming enmeshed in all this, replied that he had great confidence in Haviland and 'it was not necessary to supersede (i.e. pre-empt) him'. He believed that the cause of Uppingham's problems was well-known – although if 'the college' (sic) thought the town's drainage was inadequate, it could make a formal complaint under Section 299 of the recent Public Health Act, in which case the LGB would no doubt send down an engineer.¹⁷ He also told Childs that such matters could also be referred to Rogers Field, now conducting an investigation into the state of the town for the RSA.

Simon's concern not to yield too quickly to the school's demands may indicate the influence of an encounter earlier that afternoon of Childs' visit, when another Board official had had a conversation with Rogers Field. The latter, possibly out of a

¹⁵ Ibid: Birley and Jacob to Thring, copied to LGB 1 November 1875.

¹⁶ Ibid: Thring to Sir John Simon 2 November 1875.

¹⁷ TNA MH12/9816: LGB internal memorandum 3 November 1875.

concern to defend the position of his new client (the RSA),¹⁸ stated to this official that:

He found the masters (or some of them) less anxious about the perfection of the sanitary arrangements in their houses than they were about doing by exact measure the (minimum) of work which would satisfy the sanitary authorities.¹⁹

He suggested that the housemasters were anxious about the costs of the improvements which Tarbotton might recommend within the boarding houses. The LGB memorandum about Childs' visit states that Field's comments 'were in private conversation, but I noted them in connection with Mr Thring's urgent letter brought by Dr Childs'.²⁰

In making these approaches the school was effectively asking the LGB to by-pass Haviland and to pre-empt his forthcoming report. It is hardly surprising that the Board declined to do this, preferring instead to play for time. It assured the school that there was no cause for undue alarm, and that Field and Haviland would probably recommend radical improvements to the town rather than piecemeal ones. It was keen to avoid taking sides too soon, and especially to avoid backing either party simply because it protested the most.²¹

Thring greeted the news of Simon's distancing response with deep gloom: 'Childs cannot get us masters any help from the London Board for ourselves and we are quite

¹⁸ See ch. 4 section 8.

¹⁹ TNA MH12 9816: Field to LGB 3 Nov 1875.

²⁰ Ibid: LGB memorandum 3 November 1875.

²¹ Ibid: LGB memorandum 3 November 1875.

at sea'²². Undaunted however, he wrote again on November 21st. Childs would be visiting the Board a second time to put the school's case. This visit achieved no more than the first one; the LGB notes state that it reiterated the school's right to make a formal complaint. It added that Childs appears to have 'hinted, but was not able to speak positively' that the school doubted the sufficiency of the town sewerage.²³ Having only recently been appointed to work at his old school, he may have felt the need to express himself less forcefully than Thring.

Not convinced that these approaches were sufficient, Thring and the masters had also sent simultaneously to the LGB a formal complaint against the RSA. The complaint pointed out that the school paid large sums in rates, needed urgent help and wanted the LGB to send its engineering inspectors to Uppingham to see things for themselves. They addressed it to Sclater Booth himself — with the result that it appears initially to have by-passed Simon and those officials who had seen Childs, and who were aware of Field's criticisms of the school.

As a result, the initial reaction within the LGB to this complaint was inconsistent with the line which Simon was already taking with Childs. The LGB's copy of the complaint is annotated (probably by Sclater Booth himself).²⁴ It took a much more urgent view of the school's plight than Simon had shown. The annotation includes the words: 'Will you deal urgently with this? It is an exceptional case, and I think we ought to appoint but one inspector and Dr Haviland ought to suffice'. 'JS' (presumably Simon) conceded that Robert Rawlinson (chief engineering inspector) might be sent, but urged that he (Simon) be kept in touch with events. But he also

²² Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 16: Thring's diary 3 November 1875

²³ TNA MH12/9816: note in LGB papers 21 November 1875.

²⁴ There are the initials 'GB' and the date 7 November.

warned that sending an engineer might be diplomatically difficult, when so many others (Haviland, Field and Tarbotton) were already involved in similar investigations. In the end, the LGB – keen, as ever, to be even-handed – sent information about all this to the RSA, with the request that it pass the information on to Haviland as well.²⁵

During a week-long period from about November 11th, the LGB's officials debated whether it could stay out of this dispute any longer. There were those who believed it should remain detached: a Board official (Hugh Owen), wrote an internal memorandum to Rawlinson on November 12th that 'Mr Fleming saw (another) Uppingham deputation yesterday.' He thought Rawlinson 'might have been saved the trouble of visiting the place... but the president has returned the papers this morning and he still wishes that you should make the inspection originally proposed as early as practicable.'²⁶ Rawlinson himself (not surprisingly, for one who had always adopted a policy of non-compulsion on local authorities), argued for minimal involvement. In an internal memorandum he wrote: 'I can only advise (that) after my visit... it is important that you repudiate the idea of responsibility for any future outbreak. The responsibility is, and must remain, local'.²⁷

However, the combined efforts of the School, Sir Henry Thring and Sir Charles Adderley, finally convinced the LGB on November 15th or 16th that it had to become involved. Rawlinson would indeed be sent down to Uppingham, to add his views to those already being collected. Sclater Booth, who had been less hesitant about central

²⁵ Ibid: memorial from Thring to LGB 5 November 1875.

²⁶ Ibid: LGB to RSA 12 November 1875.

²⁷ Ibid: Rawlinson to Lambert, Secretary of LGB 11 November 1875.

intervention than Simon and Rawlinson all along, took the final decision.²⁸

Simultaneously, there was a further, but inconclusive, exchange of notes between the LGB and the RSA on the bye-laws question.

At various points in November and December the LGB also received updated information from the school, the trustees, the RSA and various water analysts about their respective activities.²⁹ All its reluctance to become involved must have been confirmed by a communication on an additional issue. Dr Bell wrote to Sclater Booth on November 12th protesting about Haviland's actions. A private war was developing between the two doctors, which probably stemmed from Bell's own defensiveness about his past actions or omissions, and resentment at what he perceived as Haviland's over-bearing conduct.

Bell had already complained to the Authority about Haviland's demand for information about his patients. He also resented Haviland's attempt to force him to come to a meeting which Haviland had called with all three town GPs – and the implied support of the RSA for such dictatorial action. The Board wrote back supporting Haviland's actions but stating that Haviland had no *legal* right to make Bell appear. Beyond that, it could not express an opinion on the RSA's actions in what was a local matter.³⁰

Bell persisted, writing again on December 7th in great detail. Far from being indifferent to Haviland's enquiries, he (Bell) had met the inspector of nuisances (Mr James), and he had talked at least three times with Haviland himself. He had had no

²⁸ Ibid: LGB memo 12 November 1875.

²⁹ Ibid: LGB papers – dates between 12 November and 17 December 1875.

³⁰ Ibid: Bell to Sclater Booth 12 November 1875.

time to attend the doctors' meeting, because it had been called at very short notice – which seems to be at variance with his and Haviland's other statements that Bell had pleaded sudden illness as the cause. If he was under fire for not reporting suspected typhoid cases to Haviland in June and October, he would like to know whether the other local doctors were under similar investigation over alleged cases in the town a year earlier. Haviland had allegedly visited Bell's patients unreasonably and repeatedly, and had also suggested alternative treatments for some of these patients.³¹

Bell was to write at least three more times in similar vein. It is hard to believe that his personal struggle with Haviland helped the school's cause very much at this point. The LGB dutifully replied each time, and passed news of Bell's approaches on to Haviland for comment. Haviland replied on December 23rd that his forthcoming report would clearly rebut such charges. The LGB did however note in its files that Haviland might have breached professional etiquette, even if he had not exceeded his authority.³²

3) THE BATTLE IN THE PRESS

The battle had meanwhile entered the columns of the national press. Thring had had some dealings with newspapers over the years as the school's fame and reputation grew. This had not always been favourable – notably at Easter in 1861 when he had warned the boys that too many were returning late after exeat (half-term) breaks, citing difficulty in finding suitable trains as an excuse. After he had caned two boys who had ignored this warning, the father of one of them wrote demanding an apology and threatening to complain to the trustees. Other parents in the boy's home area

³¹ Ibid: Bell to LGB 7 December 1875. The patients included a woman in advanced pregnancy.

³² Ibid: LGB internal memorandum 14 December 1875.

started to take sides; the father then started a press campaign – which had prompted one journalist to write: ‘If Mr Thring does not train his boys’ minds, he certainly teaches them to mind their trains’.³³

On October 30th the *Lancet* carried an editorial highly critical of the school,³⁴ probably fed by discontented parents whose sons had been taken home before the school broke up on November 5th : ‘In all the houses the cesspit system has been adopted, and the water-supply is in dangerous proximity. In some of the houses the dormitories are supplied with water from the cisterns which supply the water-closets’. Pointing out that, by contrast, the town was apparently free from typhoid, the writer suggested that there was much which Haviland should investigate within the school.

The *Lancet* also carried an anonymous letter from an anonymous *Medicus*,³⁵ claiming to be a relative who had visited one of the stricken boys. It alleged that he had been given evasive answers to his questions by both Hodgkinson and Thring, and that the boy had turned out to be in a room at the sanatorium with one of his contemporaries ‘in the second week of typhoid fever, with a temperature of over 105 degrees fahrenheit’. Dr Bell had allegedly tried to avoid meeting *Medicus*, who complained:

...of the school authorities for not telling parents when the fever first broke out, for not telling them when the children first showed signs of the disease, for studiously shutting their eyes to the real nature of the disease, for doing

³³ Rawnsley, WF: *Edward Thring: Maker of Uppingham School, Headmaster 1853-1887* (1926) p. 37. He was quoting a *Punch* journalist.

³⁴ *Lancet* 30 October 1875.

³⁵ Probably a generic pen-name, and maybe not a single individual. I am indebted to Mr David Sharp, retired Deputy Editor of the *Lancet*, for his advice. This letter also appeared in other journals (e.g. the *Courier*); it was countered by *A present Uppinghamian of seven and a half years’ standing* in the same journal on 5 November 1875: copy in UA.

nothing to improve the sanitary arrangements and for keeping boys in places which were mere pest-houses, as I hear they have been condemned by the medical officer of health.³⁶

As the writer signed off by stating: 'I enclose my card', one assumes that the journal knew his identity.

Thring took the opportunity of a masters' meeting on the following day to insist that no-one should write to the press without consulting him first. He wanted to keep control of any press counter-claims himself. He may well have been anxious to avoid too much of a public slanging match, for he had just received a letter from Bell, admitting problems in the sanatorium - of ventilation, a shortage of beds and lack of cooking facilities and storage space. It seems likely that Bell had also raised these issues with Mrs Grigg, its superintendent, causing her to resign.³⁷ While having to replace her was probably an added inconvenience at the time, it may in retrospect have been seen as fortuitous. Forty years later in an obituary article on her successor, (Miss Goodwin) the *USM* stated that the new matron had completely reorganized the sanatorium on her arrival³⁸ - a remark which also gives some credence to Haviland's later criticisms of the sanatorium arrangements at the time when typhoid struck the school.

The *Times* took up the attack on November 5th, quoting from the RSA's hurried statement of self-defence,³⁹ which had just been published. It lambasted the sanitary

³⁶ *Lancet* 30 October 1875.

³⁷ UA: Bell to Thring (n/d).

³⁸ *USM* February 1916.

³⁹ See ch. 4 section 8.

arrangements at Redgate, Christian's house, whose boys had included the late Stephen Nash:

It appears that the house is quite isolated and has no connection with the general drainage of Uppingham – in fact, all the sewage is received into cesspits which are close to the water-supply. The cisterns supplying the water closets in nearly all the affected houses are furnished with taps from which the dormitories (too) are supplied with water. Sinks both above and below empty themselves directly into the drains; and in fact it would be impossible to find arrangements more directly fitted to engender and spread the special disease which has shown itself at Uppingham School. Though the house in which the fever first showed itself [i.e. the Lower School] is a splendid mansion, the architect seems to have altogether forgotten to provide for the health of its inmates. Gigantic cesspools were in close relation to the water supply and every arrangement was made for the pollution of the air by regurgitation of gases from the water closets.

Quoting another article in the *Sanitary Record*, it suggested that the school had been both secretive and slow to react.⁴⁰

This was all very damaging to the School's reputation – and was made worse when *The Lancet* returned to the attack a week later, reporting the recent RSA meeting:

A resolution was unanimously carried that serious blame attaches to the

⁴⁰ *Times* 5 November 1875.

masters... The Medical Officer of the School was also blamed for not investigating the causes of the disease and not reporting the fact of the outbreak to the Sanitary Inspector. The Board likewise censured [Dr Bell] for not attending a meeting of medical practitioners in the town, convened by the Medical Officer of Health for the purpose of obtaining every information on the cause and history of the outbreak... we should like to know if his reticence was due to pressure put on him by school authorities.

It also challenged Thring's fitness to continue as headmaster, for allowing healthy boys to visit infected houses: 'This fact the committee consider should be laid before the trustees of the school, and parents of all boys who had suffered...' It concluded: 'The Sanitary Authority have acted with spirit and determination and the censures they have administered will be a useful warning to other offenders'.⁴¹

Similarly critical articles appeared on that day in two Liverpool papers, right in Uppingham's recruiting heartland. The *Liverpool Post* believed that 'the commonest precautions have been recklessly disregarded',⁴² while the *Liverpool Daily News* alleged that:

... letters and telegrams sent by anxious parents had remained almost unanswered... Mothers, who fled in an agony of apprehension to Uppingham, had the greatest difficulty in obtaining access to their sick children.

It added, for good measure:

⁴¹ *Lancet* 6 November 1875.

⁴² *Liverpool Post* 6 November 1875.

Perhaps by this time the logic of facts has convinced [that] even the autocratic will of the headmaster of an English public school is inefficient against the laws of nature, that sewage gas will bring enteric fever, however sternly he may set his face against it.... What a pungent satire upon our fashionable methods of education does this disaster devolve. Uppingham is a good old-fashioned grammar school, far away among the green fields and bowery lanes of Rutlandshire, which the prevalent rage for public school education and the overflowing fullness of such ancient foundations as Eton, Harrow, Winchester and Rugby have lately raised into prominence. And at Uppingham they believe with a touchingly profound belief in Latin and Greek... some provision is no doubt made for Maths training. How natural science fares, the sad story told above may bear witness. But the speciality of the school is classics. Nothing can be better in their place.

We too have a profound belief in classical training as a means of education... Boys at Uppingham stand high in the classical schools of Oxford and Cambridge, and a good degree means not only a possible fellowship, but an advantageous introduction to the professional world. Still, without some regard to the laws of health, boys will never get to Oxford and Cambridge at all. Nature, insulted, by a contiguity of wells and cesspools, will not stand aside, even in obedience to the exigencies of a classical education. Perhaps a little time could be found at Uppingham for the study of Huxley without abstracting too much from the imperfect imitations of Virgil and Ovid. The

indicting of which, as is well-known, is the indispensable accomplishment of an educated gentleman.

Perhaps when the cesspools are all cleared out and the water supply is beyond suspicion, and the boys are all back at Uppingham, the Local Government Board... will send a teacher of elementary physiology into Rutlandshire. It would be a good investment of time on the part of both masters and boys, even if the [study of classics] were intermitted for a month or two.⁴³

It says much for Thring that, although under such fierce attack, he did not surrender hope altogether; even when one paper described him as ‘a bigoted old-fashioned hater of pure air and water’.⁴⁴ He replied to a supportive letter from Dr Jex Blake, his opposite number at Rugby:⁴⁵ ‘I prize your telegram and letter exceedingly. It is very cheering to me in these heavy days to have a little sunlight let in’.⁴⁶

School and town continued to conduct a smouldering dispute in the press in the days which followed, this time over whether it would be safe for the school to reassemble in January. Haviland, true to his role as MOH by putting risk to individuals ahead of risk to the school from further disruption, urged caution and *The Lancet* supported his view in an editorial a week later.⁴⁷ This contrasted with Tarbotton who had completed his survey of the houses commissioned by the school, and who wrote more reassuringly to the housemasters: the latest analysis of the town springs by a leading

⁴³ *Liverpool Daily News* 6 November 1875.

⁴⁴ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 22: an un-named national daily paper.

⁴⁵ Thomas William Jex-Blake 1832-1915: Principal of Cheltenham College 1868-74. Headmaster of Rugby 1874-87, later Dean of Wells 1891-1911. By coincidence his sister, Sophia, was one of the pioneering figures in medicine as a career for women.

⁴⁶ *Ibid* p.19: Thring to Jex-Blake 6 November 1875.

⁴⁷ *Lancet* 11 December 1875.

London water expert, Edward Frankland ,⁴⁸ was ‘most satisfactory’.⁴⁹ Frankland also wrote to Christian himself, recommending that the wells in the garden of his house be linked to the house by lead pipes.⁵⁰

By December the worst from the press was past. The *Times*, much more sympathetic to the school this time, commented critically on the RSA’s decision over the publication of the various reports awaited. Its intention to make them public as soon as they were completed, but before they had gone to the school trustees, would (it said) be ‘a partial and premature act’.⁵¹ Barnard Smith defended himself in a memorandum disputing charges in the *Medical Examiner* that the RSA was actively antagonistic to the school.⁵²

4) A PORTENT OF THINGS TO COME

It remained to be seen how much damage the flurry of publicity had dealt the school. What the experts’ reports would eventually bring was hard to predict, for the signs were contradictory. Thring was cheered by a rumour that one inspector from London had been forthright: the RSA had much to do in the town and that ‘If work was not done, and done quickly, they (the LGB) would send down their own men and engineers, and charge it to the parish’.⁵³

⁴⁸ Hamlin, Christopher, *A Science of Impurity: Water Analysis in Nineteenth Century Britain* (Bristol, 1990) pp. 152-211: ‘The chemist Edward Frankland served as the quasi-official government analyst of the London water supply’.

⁴⁹ UA: Tarbotton to Christian December 1875.

⁵⁰ UA: Frankland to Christian 29 November 1875. Again, the analysis did not go beyond chemical issues.

⁵¹ *Times* 14 December 1875.

⁵² UA: Memorandum from Barnard Smith, 6 January 1876.

⁵³ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 21: commentary by Parkin himself.

In contrast, however, one document in the LGB files gives a bleaker indication - a copy of a letter written by a Mr Compton Maul. Maul was the parent of a boy in Thring's own house; he had written the letter to Thring on Christmas Day 1875. In it he described how he had recently run into Haviland in the street in Northampton. They had talked for about ten minutes:

Mr Haviland did not say that it would be a year before the school could possibly re-assemble, and that the locality would never be healthy again... the purport of what he said was that it would be a long time before the boys could return with safety, that the sanitary condition of the school was very bad, that the privies at the school house were in a disgraceful state, that the boys did not get enough to eat and drink, that those who paid 6 guineas a year for extra meat did not get an equivalent for their money – in fact he said quite enough to deter any father from sending his son to Uppingham. I beg you not to suppose for a moment that I acquiesce in what Mr Haviland said – the illness at the school is a great misfortune and I fancy will deter many from returning.

P.S. My boys are anxious to return to Uppingham and I shall be glad to send them there, provided I can be assured that the place is safe! ⁵⁴

On discovering that Haviland was releasing the findings of his report ahead of publication and to the detriment of the school, Thring forwarded a copy of this letter to the Board, with the observation that he had only ever met Maul once in his life. He added: 'It is hard having Mr Haviland as our judge. Money has not been spared since

⁵⁴ UA: Maul to Thring: 25 December 1875.

22 years ago I began life at Uppingham, with 25 boys in the school and but one boarding house'. He also enclosed copies of yet more exchanges between himself and Haviland, adding: 'I venture to think that the course pursued by the medical officer and the views entertained by him of his duty are not such as would be approved by the Board'.⁵⁵

He requested that all the relevant background documents to this complaint be laid before Sclater Booth himself. A LGB minute records that 'the papers are with Mr Rawlinson, and he cannot spare them today'. It is likely that the LGB's officials watched their boxes filling up with a fair degree of foreboding. They had insufficient enforcement powers, too few civil servants and 700 other authorities with which to deal.

5) THE EXPERTS' REPORTS

1876 began with town and school in a state of armed truce, both keenly awaiting the publication of the various reports: four in total. First, Alfred Tarbotton, commissioned by Thring and the masters, was to report on necessary improvements to the houses. A privately sponsored report by a Nottingham engineer would not carry the same weight as an inspection by government experts from London, but it would at least enable the school to show it was not complacent, and perhaps to put improvements in place which would help to speed up the return of the pupils.

⁵⁵ TNA MH12/9815: Thring to Lambert 3 Jan 1876.

Secondly, the RSA's action in seeking advice from Rogers Field had brought into the dispute one of the most expert drainage engineers of his day.⁵⁶ He would advise it on the state of the town and on any necessary improvements to its streets, sanitation or water supplies. Thirdly there would be the LGB report from its chief engineering inspector, Robert (later Sir Robert) Rawlinson. Finally, both town and school had appealed to Haviland for advice, and both had strong reasons for hoping that he would support their view of events. The stakes were particularly high for the school in this respect; parents would pay particular attention to Haviland's views, given their demands in October for him to be called in.

Tarbotton reported quickly. His inspection was confined to the boarding houses; it was sent to Thring and the trustees some time before Christmas 1875, and Rawlinson was also sent a copy. Conceding that all the twelve houses had been defective in drainage arrangements in various detailed ways (drain layout, faulty joints, poor ventilation and inadequate flushing), he judged that the defects were only those 'too often found in the most modern houses and mansions'.⁵⁷ He did not spare the Authority, pointing out that the four 'country' houses (up on the hill some way south of the town: those of Bagshawe, Earle, Christian and Rawnsley) had no possibility of connecting to a public sewer unless the system was radically extended. Things were not much better, however, for the 'town' houses, because the sewer there was a 'deficient in depth and construction and totally unventilated'. At least one house (Rowe's, in the High Street) had had to construct a cesspit because the local authority had specifically banned it from connecting up to the sewer, presumably for fear of over-loading the system.

⁵⁶ *Times* 3 April 1900: obituary article.

⁵⁷ UA: Tarbotton, MO: *Regulations for the drainage of the School Houses* 1876 p. 4.

Tarbotton conceded that the Lower School was, despite its comparative newness, very defective.⁵⁸ It had unventilated and sealed-up cesspools, and some leaky drains. He concluded, however, with the statement that very extensive works had recently taken place, and the Lower School now had a new well for its water supply.

He reported that the masters had all been very co-operative: 'Works of sanitary improvement have been and are already being carried out in every house' (which he listed). Finally he urged the RSA to seek a 'better source of [water] supply unless private enterprise be more active'. He also drew up a memorandum of guidance for present and future engineering improvements, ventilation and flushing.

If Thring had hoped that the positive tone of this report would persuade the trustees to agree to the School's reopening, he was quickly disappointed. They met again on December 28th and decided that they could make no decision until they had seen Rawlinson's report;⁵⁹ they were particularly keen to see what the judgement from London would be. Thring could not know as yet how long Rawlinson would take to produce his verdict, but by mid-January he believed that he had an assurance from the LGB that Rawlinson would say nothing which would prevent the reopening of the school just before the end of January.⁶⁰

Rogers Field's report (commissioned by the RSA) came out on January 6th. It was carefully researched, wide-ranging in its scope and filled with technical detail. After

⁵⁸ We do not know whether or not Thring had to put pressure on Hodgkinson to agree to be included in Tarbotton's survey, even though the Lower School was legally separate.

⁵⁹ UA: Trustees' Minute Book 28 December 1875.

⁶⁰ UA: Thring to Christian 10 January 1876.

describing the growth of the town and the sewerage improvements made in previous years, he detailed the sanitary arrangements in all the 379 properties in the town which the RSA's inspector had visited at Field's request.⁶¹

Although brought in to advise the RSA, Field was forthright about the state of the town. He reported that the south sewer – just three years old - had been well constructed and was in good condition, but its seven ventilators were all blocked. Older sewers in the central part of the town had faulty joints and were poorly ventilated; many of their ventilators were choked with dirt. In the eastern part of the High Street, gradients were very flat,⁶² so that cellars from some properties could not be drained into them and thus remained flooded.

None of the sewers had any provisions for flushing; some sewage ran out of storm outflows and too much of it backed up in manholes because of inadequate gradients. However, Field also noted that although a system of sewerage had been constructed, it appeared to be very little used, 'the greater portion of the town still draining into cesspools, many of which are very badly situated and offensive'.

At the sewage farm in Seaton Lane, he noted some defects, and suspected that tanks were too small and had been emptied only very irregularly - although he noted a recent change: 'Now they are emptied every fortnight'. Finally he noted that there was no public water supply, and that many of the private wells appeared to be contaminated. All these facts led him to conclude that the cesspits must be abolished, and that the water-carriage system of sewage disposal should be completed (rather

⁶¹ See ch. 1 section 2.

⁶² For example, near the Waggon and Horses public house.

than a dry-earth method being started). He believed that it would be better to lay new, deeper sewers than to attempt to re-lay the existing ones where they had faults. He was emphatic that a mains water supply was needed, both for drinking purposes and to aid sewage disposal and drain flushing.

Within the school itself, he had visited every house and described matters in great detail. He found that many of the cesspools were unventilated or poorly so; some were too close to wells. There were examples of drains passing under houses, poorly sited and poorly maintained water-closets, poorly ventilated soil pipes and a number of other engineering deficiencies in sinks, baths and lavatories. He laid great emphasis on miasmatic problems arising from gases and foul air. At least two houses had poor connections to the town sewers. Many wells were too near to cesspools and drains. Field agreed with Tarbotton's recommendations, and also agreed with him in praising the co-operative and positive attitude of masters who were carrying them out.⁶³

Rawlinson's findings (for the LGB) followed a few days later, on January 12th. His report was much briefer than the others – perhaps reflecting his instinctive reluctance for the LGB to be drawn too far into disputes of this sort. He explained how Thring and the masters had requested an enquiry, how he had met them on November 16th and had then joined Tarbotton and Field on a tour of inspection to see the work already being done to put the existing town sewers and drains into better order. He listed past complaints against the RSA and the works which the RSA had undertaken since 1857, with their costs and the loans taken out to cover them. He added: 'As the school-houses have been increased in number, reiterated applications have been made

⁶³ UA: Field, Rogers: *Report to the Sanitary Authority* (1876) p. 15.

by the masters to the local authority for public sewerage accommodation, and also for an improved water supply’.

He concluded: ‘During all these years and after all this expenditure of money, the main sewers have been practically useless, if not in some respects mischievous’, owing to inadequate maintenance. The report then added a new dimension:

There has been local opposition by the owners and ratepayers, and so the local authority has performed its duty only imperfectly; making sewers at considerable cost for parts of the district but never completing them, or even serving notices for the abolition of private cesspools and the execution of house drainage.

It condemned ‘owners and ratepayers, by their own obstinacy in not draining their houses’, and stated: ‘There is most unfortunately a strong prejudice in small rural towns and villages against sewer ventilation because, it is said, the openings permit bad smells to issue’.

Rawlinson believed that once Tarbotton’s recommendations had been carried out, ‘the school will be in as complete and satisfactory a state as the best modern sanitary science can put them’. He approved of the inspection work done by Field.⁶⁴ Finally he reiterated the dangers from contaminated wells. All in all he was highly supportive of the school’s case.

⁶⁴ UA: *Uppingham: Town and School Reports by R Rawlinson Esq* p. 2.

Rawlinson's report in particular impressed the trustees. Six days later (January 18th) they confidently agreed that the new term could begin on the 28th,⁶⁵ although Wales (the one man who was both a trustee *and* a leading RSA member) wanted the decision to be delayed until the one remaining report - Haviland's - had been published. It is possible that his dual role had given him a more detailed preview of Haviland's thinking than the other trustees could have had.

Notwithstanding Wales' opposition, the trustees instructed Thring to inform the parents that all the necessary sanitary measures had been carried out, and that Dr Childs had 'been appointed science master and charged with all sanitary arrangements in connection with the school'. Thring wrote to his brother (Sir Henry) that 'we have had a squeak for it',⁶⁶ and that Birley and Jacob had had some difficulty in getting the motion passed at the meeting. Again he complained bitterly at how little the town had done itself, either in recent weeks or in the previous five years, and reflected gloomily on the likely impact on the school's entry lists of all the recent bad publicity. He made it clear that he would have resigned if the motion to start the new term had not been passed:

It would be ludicrous, if it was not so important, to see my trustees... sitting in solemn conclave playing with other men's lives... Yet there they are, totally ignorant of the business of the school, also passing judgement on us and our work and our fortunes...⁶⁷

⁶⁵ UA: Trustees' Minute Book 18 January 1876.

⁶⁶ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 25: Thring to Sir Henry Thring 19 January 1876.

⁶⁷ Ibid pp. 26-27: Thring to Sir Henry Thring 19 January 1876.

6) HAVILAND'S FINDINGS

Haviland, having originally been called in by each side (albeit for very different reasons), had made a number of visits to Uppingham between October and Christmas 1875, and had continued to write in both *The Lancet* and the *Liverpool Daily Post* that, as he had no evidence that the proposed structural improvements to the houses had been made, he could not recommend the return of the boys.⁶⁸ He had taken his time over his report, encouraging all parents whose sons had been affected by the disease to contact him.⁶⁹ As MOH he was far more concerned with the proper demands of his role than with the adverse impact on the school of his report being published just before the planned date for the pupils' return.

Thring had some premonition of what Haviland's report might contain, thanks to the letter which he had received just before the end of December from Maul. On January 24th (in the week before the new term was due to begin) he confided to his diary: 'Private copies of the indictment of the school going about. The masters are very troubled, and there is plenty of reason for it, for it is... clever and scurrilous to the last degree'.⁷⁰ Three days later he wrote:

I have heard from London that the report is going about there. Beale [a medical specialist, supportive of the school] is very disgusted. Jacob and Birley have also seen it. I hear the Bishop of Peterborough says the trustees must notice it. This is a fresh danger...

⁶⁸ *Lancet* 21 January 1876 and *Liverpool Daily Post* 22 January 1876.

⁶⁹ *The Lancet* 27 November 1875.

⁷⁰ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 28: Thring's diary 24 January 1876.

Haviland's report ran to fifty foolscap sides – by far the longest of the four reports.⁷¹

It opened with a graphic description of some of the likely preconditions for a typhoid epidemic, including 'the domestic pig, when fed on the offal and blood from the butcher's slaughter-house'. It emphasized the paramount need for speedy investigation of the first case in any outbreak, and the advisability of keeping young people away from any infected house.

The history of the outbreak was then given chronologically – from the death of Hawke in June at the Lower School, via Chapman's explosive visit to its underground chambers, to the clutch of cases in October which caused the four deaths. Haviland stated that there had been thirty cases by October 12th and that by that date not 'a single step had been taken towards investigating the cause of this lamentable outbreak'.⁷²

He cast doubt on Thring's claim to Liverpool parents on October 11th that they did not need to contact Haviland because the school had *already* summoned him, suggesting that the telegram had not gone off until the evening of that day, and was thus sent only when parental pressure looked as if it was becoming overwhelming. Mrs Richardson's complaint that the true state of her son's case had been kept from her until it was too late 'made a deep impression on me... I found indeed, that she had reason to complain, and moreover I made the further discovery that she did not stand alone in her unmerited trouble'.

⁷¹ Haviland, Alfred: *Report on the late outbreak of Enteric Fever in Archdeacon Johnson's School, Uppingham, Rutland: June-November 1875.*

⁷² Ibid: p. 5.

He criticised Hodgkinson for allowing his cook to go home to Caldecott (a village five miles to the south), probably causing the death there of an 18 year-old who lived in the next door house. Dr Bell was censured for failing to attend the meeting of town doctors called by Haviland on October 20th - in contrast to Dr Walford whom Haviland praised for attending it despite “serious illness”. He implied that Thring had put pressure on Bell to stay away. Bell’s subsequent complaint to the LGB (after Haviland visited one of his patients) was quoted at length - and criticised.⁷³ He rejected the charge, made in a petition to the LGB from John Hawthorn and 22 other town residents about his ‘having made various unofficial statements’. He was particularly incensed that the infected houses had not been closed to other boys at an early stage.

He confirmed his conviction that the epidemic originated in the Lower School, citing Professor Wancklyn, a water analysis expert,⁷⁴ who had examined water from its wells (although the professor was later to claim that his views had been misrepresented.)⁷⁵ He also believed that Nash, from far-off Redgate, had contracted the disease by swimming in infected water. This section of the report described the course taken by the stream flowing out of Hodgkinson’s garden, and painted a graphic picture of its progress through the town:

Above this point it is pure... It [then] flows along the south of the town, receiving first an effluent which may be traced to the overflow of the town spring. It is contaminated by the oozings from the site of the old gas

⁷³ TNA MH12/9815: Bell to LGB, 12 November 1875, 7 and 21 December 1875.

⁷⁴ James Alfred Wancklyn 1834-1906: analytical chemist, Professor of Chemistry, London Institution 1863-70 and public analyst for several towns and cities.

⁷⁵ *Sanitary Record*: 5 February 1876. See also Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 31: 7 February 1876.

works...after this it receives the drainings from manure heaps, of a cowshed, a pigstye, a stable, and other accumulation of filth... and before passing under the bridge it becomes still further polluted by the small overflow of a cesspit in the neighbourhood of the national school. After this the stream skirts the cemetery, and receives its drainage; it then flows on beyond the town and becomes the feeder of the bathing place and swimming pond! There the water becomes so filthy, that from the information of men who were old Uppingham boys, many wisely declined to enter its befouled waters... The poor Nash had bathed in this filthy pond as late as the 14th September, if not later... This brook then passes to the south of Bisbrook, where I am informed it is used for brewing purposes.⁷⁶

There then followed four pages detailing shortcomings in the Lower School's water-closets, drains and cesspits, before he turned to the shared drainage between Mullins' boarding house and Paul David's private dwelling close by. He believed that, when water was discharged down one drain, this resulted in foul air being forced up the other. He also criticised the fact that, although neither of the two wells at Mullins' house were fit for drinking, boys had somehow been able to use them in direct contravention of their housemaster's instructions. These wells should have been used only for washing, as their water came from a tap in the WC cistern supplied from a contaminated well.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ It is believed locally that it was known as the 'piss brook'.

⁷⁷ UA: Tate, David: *West Deyne: A Short History*, unpublished manuscript (n/d).

He then referred much more briefly to deficiencies in the other houses⁷⁸ - in contrast to the inspection report of 1868 for the Taunton Commission, which had praised the domestic arrangements as 'perfect'⁷⁹ – before concentrating on the sanatorium. He had visited it with Field and had found major deficiencies in the cesspits. He criticized 'a great want of nurses... the matron complained that all authority over them was denied her' (the reason cited for her resignation), and he criticised the practice of waking boys up for regular feeding when what they really needed was sleep. He was especially critical of Bell's treatment of one patient there, John Millington Sing from the Lower School.⁸⁰

According to Haviland, Bell had advised that Sing be fed at thirty-minute intervals without fail. However the nurses found it took quarter of an hour to wake the exhausted boy. By the time he was fed and had gone back to sleep, on Bell's schedule it was time to wake him again. Haviland happened to call in at the sanatorium before leaving Uppingham and sensibly said sleep was the one thing needed. 'The advice was followed, and the boy slept soundly for several hours and eventually recovered. I could not see a boy struggling for life, and not give him help in the time of his need in the form of advice, which I knew to be sound.' Dr Bell, however, had subsequently written to him to complain that Haviland had interfered with his order.

Finally, Haviland criticized a number of other aspects of the school regime. The studies and dormitories were too small and/or overcrowded – less cubic space per

⁷⁸ Rigby: unpublished manuscript ch. 18 p. 8.

⁷⁹ *Report of the Commissioners: Schools Inquiry Vol VII* (North Midland Division) p. 135.

⁸⁰ Haviland: *Report* p. 27. The boy was John Millington Sing, later Warden of St Edward's School, Oxford.

pupil than that for prisoners in the Daventry lock-up. Many were ill-ventilated or not ventilated at all. 'It is absurd to suppose that a boy can study in an unventilated box, without a fireplace, and heated in the winter by a hot air pipe.' He implied that the food was too economical and insufficiently nutritious. He criticised the lateness of breakfast (caused by the timing of early-morning lessons) as a possible promoter of disease.

He suggested a wide range of possible explanations for the outbreak – including poor diet, over-demanding school routines causing weakened resistance, swimming in or drinking foul water, and poor drainage. Suggestions of both infection and contagion appear, but along with frequent references to poor ventilation and sewer gases. There are also theories as to how 'the poison is generated in the excreta of an affected person after they are voided'. He believed in the existence of a 'process of putrefactive fermentation which they invariably undergo when massed in cesspits etc', and asserted that 'the poison is liable to gain access either to the air or the water' – suggesting that he was at pains not to rule out miasmatic causes, particularly in the case of Kettlewell from the Lower School who (he believed) had contracted the illness 'by being exposed to the influence of sewer-gases, emanating from the unventilated cesspool' there.⁸¹

Haviland had also considered possible sources of contaminated drinking material, but while he recognised 'the need for a further and purer water supply', he believed that this was less pressing than dealing with the cesspits. On the other hand 'only by such a means can you guard against the present and future influence of the disease...' He

⁸¹ Haviland: *Report* p. 43.

had pondered - and rejected - the idea that milk from Mr Wortley's⁸² cows at nearby Ridlington might be to blame.

Haviland re-used a number of the statistics which had appeared in his report on the combined districts eighteen months earlier, but it is noticeable that he drew rather more optimistic conclusions about the *general* state of health in the town than in that earlier report. He also asserted that at the recent doctors' meeting which had become notorious for Bell's absence, the other two GPs (Walford and Brown) had claimed to have had only three typhoid cases between them in the town in the previous two years – and those only in one property. Annotations and names listed by Thring on the copy of the report still held in the school archives suggest that Bell disputed this.⁸³

In the final paragraph of the report, Haviland thanked the members of the RSA for their support 'throughout this tedious investigation' and expressed the hope that 'whatever course you decide to adopt will be successful in securing one of the healthiest and finest sites in the country from preventable disease'. He even implied that it was the RSA alone which had originally invited him to intervene back in October, while omitting the fact that the school had made a similar request a day or two earlier.

To the school, Barnard Smith added insult to injury. In distributing Haviland's report, he attached a long memorandum setting out his version of the events which had led up to it. He too emphasised the lack of co-operation from Dr Bell; he believed that (in complaining about Haviland's actions), Hawthorn and his fellow-petitioners had

⁸² A leading member of the RSA: see ch.2 section 2.

⁸³ Haviland: *Report* p. 9. See also UA: memorandum from Bell to Thring 29 February 1876.

failed to produce evidence or witnesses to support their complaint against Haviland's conduct.⁸⁴

Hodgkinson felt bound to respond individually to criticism of his actions. In a short pamphlet dated February 10th he defended his actions, 'pleading guilty to ignorance of the origin and nature of typhoid', having [he said] never experienced a case in 21 years. He disputed points of detail in the cases of both the Southampton pageboy, and the Caldecott maid; things were not as Haviland had portrayed them. The Chapman gas explosion had been greatly exaggerated, and the cesspit system around the town was one 'which the local authority did not raise their little finger to alter or improve' as Rawlinson had pointed out: 'The blame of course rests primarily with the Sanitary Board.'⁸⁵

Hodgkinson sent a copy to Wales, who responded with uncharacteristic gentleness to an old friend. The distress which Haviland's report had caused was understood (Wales said), but the RSA had felt compelled to publish it or - like Thring - it would have been accused of secrecy. He was at pains to explain that Haviland's was an independent voice; that no-one was blaming Hodgkinson personally for the state of the Lower School cesspits, but that the first case of illness should have led to an investigation. The RSA really was doing all it could to remedy problems in the town, but it was inevitable that ventilators would periodically become blocked. He also explained that the LGB was being very slow to grant the RSA increased powers

⁸⁴ UA: *A statement of the action of the Sanitary Committee by the Chairman*, 19 Jan 1876.

⁸⁵ UA: Hodgkinson, RJ: *Remarks on Mr Haviland's Report on the Visitation of Fever in the School and Town of Uppingham* 10 February 1876.

through new bye-laws.⁸⁶ Hodgkinson wrote back on February 25th,⁸⁷ only a little mollified. Wales replied again on the 29th,⁸⁸ but it was a dialogue of the deaf.

7) HAVILAND'S MOTIVES

Haviland owed the school no loyalty, and he had no reason to protect it. It was his responsibility to try to act in the interests of the community as a whole. This epidemic was centred within the school rather than through the town.

Even so, it is hard to assess his thinking in producing a report which was so much more critical of the school than the other three, and it is not clear as to why he turned so decisively against it after his early, comparatively civil meetings with Thring, or why he appears subsequently to have been determined to show it in the worst possible light. He must surely have had some inkling of the damage that such a wide-ranging report would do to the school, and of the furious reaction that it would provoke from masters who saw their livelihoods being put at risk by such criticism.

It can be argued that he hedged his bets over the root cause of the epidemic, preferring instead to adopt a scatter-gun approach of criticism, partly based on miasmatic and partly on other theories. Although he made some criticisms of the state of the town (notably the national school cesspits), these were moderate in comparison to the evidence already cited by both Field and Rawlinson. They contrasted even more starkly in their moderation with the blame which he heaped upon the school.

⁸⁶ UA: Wales, W: *Letter to Rev RJ Hodgkinson touching his remarks on Mr Haviland's Report and the action of the Sanitary Authority* 21 February 1876.

⁸⁷ UA: Hodgkinson, RJ, *A letter to the Rev Chancellor Wales in reply to his letter of February 21st, on the action of the Uppingham Sanitary Authority*, 25 February 1876.

⁸⁸ UA: Wales, W: *A Rejoinder to the second letter of Rev RJ Hodgkinson on the action of the Uppingham Sanitary Authority* 29 February 1876.

He also showed little regard for the day-to-day realities of housemasters' lives. With autumn drawing on in October and the hours of darkness increasing, the morale of both pupils and staff would have been increasingly tested; with long evenings in candlelight there would surely have come a greater sense of foreboding if they were unduly confined to their houses.

He allowed little for the fact that, while it was fine in theory to make rules for boys about where they might go and what they might drink, enforcement was difficult in practice. Housemasters taught classes and could not watch their boys all the time – nor would it have been practicable to guarantee to restrict pupils' movements and to separate them from their friends in other houses for long periods in order to keep them out of harm's way. Many lessons took place in boarding house dining halls, and boys needed to move around the town to attend them.

Perhaps the fact that there had been nearly 40 cases in the school but less than half that figure in the town⁸⁹ (which had eight times as many people, and where there is no evidence of any epidemic amongst those of school age), convinced Haviland that the school should bear nearly all the blame. He may well have been incensed by what he perceived to be Thring's high-handedness in repeatedly seeking help from the LGB. It seems likely that he had been outraged by the complaints to the LGB by Dr Bell, whom he singled out for particular criticism. He had a low opinion of Bell's skills as a physician; in seeking to apportion blame as part of his enquiry, his anger focused on a man whose work he could assess with some expertise (even if he mixed this with a

⁸⁹ Registrar General's Annual Report 1875: causes of death.

certain amount of hindsight). Thus the school seems to have become the focus for Haviland's anger about Bell.

Even allowing for his strong belief that a medical man should investigate the widest possible aspects of an epidemic, his criticisms of the broader aspects of school and boarding house management smack of someone pursuing a personal (as well as a professional) campaign, with (it could be argued) a selective use of facts at times, combined with fierce rhetoric. It was inevitable that Thring would feel that Haviland had concentrated exclusively on the immediate reasons for the outbreak, while saying little about the RSA's inactivity in the past.

Haviland would make only occasional appearances in Uppingham over the course of the next year – usually to advise either on further cases of small-scale illness or on proposals to prevent them. His work was largely done at this point. He did not create the antipathy between Thring and Barnard Smith's RSA, but he certainly sustained it. If he had developed a strong personal dislike of Thring during his meetings that autumn, it is unlikely that he was wholly to blame – the two men were very similar in some ways.

But the way in which Haviland promoted his public health crusade ensured that any remaining spirit of compromise between the two sides rapidly disappeared. It also created a lasting and bitter enmity with Dr Bell – one which Bell would pursue relentlessly through the year to come. In that sense, Haviland was the catalyst for the events which lay ahead.

Two key points however have to be made in his defence. If he equivocated over the precise causes of the epidemic, this is not surprising, in view of the state of knowledge at the time.⁹⁰ Furthermore, just over a decade after the publication of his report on Uppingham, nearly all his health-specific and wider recommendations appeared in the first edition of a book by the MO at Rugby. Over the next twenty years, Clement Dukes' book *Health at School*,⁹¹ would become a much-reprinted handbook for the running of a good boarding establishment.⁹² The wording of the introduction to its first edition, together with the brevity of its bibliography, suggests that very little literature was available before that date which would have given Thring and Bell any precise guidelines about how to handle a school epidemic.⁹³

8) CONCLUSION

Although friction between town and school gave the epidemic and its outcomes a special dimension, in many ways events there reflect widespread medical, sanitary and financial dilemmas throughout the country at the time. The LGB's reputation for a lack of decisive action is confirmed, and the various interventions in the press meant that an agreed and harmonious way forward would be that much harder to achieve. Haviland must share some of the responsibility for this, given the extent and tenor of his report.

⁹⁰ See appendix 4 section 1.

⁹¹ Dukes, Clement: *Health at School Considered in its Mental, Moral and Physical Aspects* (1887). There had been a school doctor at Rugby since 1868. Dukes held the post from 1871 until 1908. See also appendix 4 section 2.

⁹² See ch. 8 section 13.

⁹³ Dukes: *Health at School* p. xv and p. 1. There is only a very short list of sources cited in Dukes' bibliography, all written *after* 1876, and mostly of a general nature about school management. Dukes also writes that 'the time seems ripe for some adequate and simple guide to the application of the principles of hygiene to school life'. Searches of the *BMJ* and the *Lancet* in the years before 1875 reveal very little about school health management, other than factual reports of illness, and an article entitled 'Air in Public Schools' (*Lancet*: 26 April 1873) – but this was not about epidemics.

CHAPTER 6 – SPRING 1876

This chapter describes the return of the school after Christmas, only to suffer the recurrence of typhoid a month later. It was a period in which both school and town were digesting the implications of the experts' reports, and their implications for future action on sanitation and water supply, while they continued to lobby the LGB. With the third typhoid outbreak in the school, and continuing vacillation by both the RSA and the school trustees, Thring then decided that the only course of action open to him was to remove the school altogether from Uppingham for a time. The extent to which this represented a bold, even foolhardy, idea is examined, along with the reaction in, and likely implications for, the town.

1) THE SCHOOL RETURNS: JANUARY 1876

'A terribly cold north-east wind and a slight fall of snow, looking threateningly for more... it seems still very uncertain when the school return, maybe 21st (but probably not), or 28th or 4th February,' wrote Mrs Hodgkinson from the Lower School to her daughter just after New Year.¹ With the trustees' meeting a fortnight later came the decision that it would be on January 28th: 'Pray God keep us this term,' wrote Thring in his diary: 'Masters' meeting this morning. Had to speak to them strongly about tittle-tattle'.²

For a passionate and sometimes excitable man, he was surprisingly at peace at this time – outwardly at least. At Christmas he had bidden farewell to one of his most stalwart housemasters, Theophilus Rowe, departing to become headmaster of

¹ UA: Letter from Mrs Hodgkinson: copy given to the author by the late CM Hodgkinson, 1976.

² Parkin, GR, (ed): *Edward Thring, Headmaster of Uppingham School: Life, Diary and Letters* (1898) Vol. 2 p. 30: Thring's diary 28 January 1876.

Tonbridge – a man whose organisational skills, diverse talents and encyclopaedic knowledge would be greatly missed. But after the busy and frustrating weeks of presiding over an empty school, he could now get back to proper work. He had received Haviland's report just before term began. In between bouts of raging at its perceived injustice, he seemed almost resigned:

As we have often said in old days, 'If this thing is of God, it will stand; if not, let it go... It illustrates what I have so often pointed out – the impossibility of getting at the truth in a complicated matter... I was almost amused when I read it, at the ease with which I was made out a liar and a scoundrel... It marvellously opens a man's eyes when he has once or twice seen himself pictured in the 'devil's looking-glass'; he gets a sounder idea of man's praise and blame, the latter especially. I may yet go down to posterity as the great flogger, and 'bigoted old hater of pure air and water', and senseless, unfeeling tyrant over boys which these fellows paint me.³

He cannot have been pleased to receive a letter from Dr Bell asking whether it was he who had suggested to Haviland that Bell had been slow to recognize the nature of the illness⁴ – nor by another lengthy and critical report which appeared in *The Lancet* that day. It concluded that:

The school authorities assumed a grave responsibility... Sad as the lesson is, it will not be without value if it teaches [them] the necessity of trusting less to their own omniscience and more to the guidance of those who, by special

³ Ibid: Thring's diary 29 January 1876.

⁴ UA: Bell, Thomas: *Letterbook* 1876-1904: 29 January 1876.

training, are best qualified to give advice and act in such emergencies.”⁵

An editorial added to the annoyance, by backing Haviland in every respect – including his comments about the wider management of the school. A few days later however, he felt that school life was gradually to be returning to normal. ‘There are thirty new boys... and 305 on the school-books, so we have not suffered an appreciable check’,⁶ he wrote cheerfully on January 29th, although he may have been in denial about the real state of pupil numbers. The *USR* suggests that over 50 pupils under the age of 18 left the school in October or December 1875, while only just over 30 joined in January 1876.

Thring could not yet know whether things might get worse; in the event, another 16 would go in March, of whom some can be identified as transferring to schools such as Rugby, Repton, and Clifton. Eighteen of those who left were from the north-west and another 13 from London – suggesting a parental grapevine of gossip adversely affecting the school. Mullins and Christian seem to have been especially hard hit, with 8 losses each – hardly surprising, considering the large number of typhoid cases in Mullins’ house during the October outbreak (and the death of his son), and the fact that the late Stephen Nash had been one of Christian’s pupils at Redgate. Rowe’s house was also affected by diminished numbers; it was not unusual at that time for masters to take boys with them when they left a school, and several went with him to Tonbridge.⁷ It was just as well that Uppingham’s numbers had been allowed to creep

⁵ *Lancet* 29 January 1876.

⁶ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 31: Thring’s diary 31 January 1876.

⁷ As Holden had done 25 years earlier, when he left Uppingham for Durham School.

up above Thring's optimum 300 in the previous few years; at least it allowed for a little unnatural wastage now.⁸

As the term gained momentum he began to rue the large number of abnormal matters still to attend to; he complained that he had little time for intellectual work and teaching. But he was also cheered by the progress being made on the trial borings: 'The water works on the hill are going well',⁹ and the fact that the parliamentary processes were under way.¹⁰ The water bill got its second reading in the House of Commons on 25th February.¹¹ The rebuttal in the *BMJ* by Professor Wancklyn, of Haviland's assertion that Wancklyn believed the Lower School water supply to be the certain source of the typhoid outbreak, was further good news for Thring.¹²

The RSA seemed increasingly uncertain about the best attitude to take over the water supply question. It did not wish to be seen to obstruct the public good, but it was hardly likely to be enthusiastic about endorsing a private company outside its long-term control, and it was also determined not to let Thring seize the initiative. On 9 February it instructed Rogers Field to 'ascertain the best and most economical mode of providing a water supply'. In order to protect its position, however, it also instructed Brown, its clerk (at a meeting on 11 March) to oppose Thring's bill for a private company, or at the very least to get a clause protecting its interests.¹³

⁸ *USR* (sixth issue 1932).

⁹ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 23: Thring's diary 18 January 1876.

¹⁰ *Mercury* 4 February 1876.

¹¹ *Ibid*: 25 February 1876.

¹² *BMJ* 4 March 1876. See ch. 5 section 6.

¹³ UA: handwritten copy of minute.

February arrived, and with it came a tone of greater cheerfulness in Thring's diary: 'The first week over, such a blessing, and time, the great healer, moving slowly on, carrying us, please God, out of immediate danger by degrees'.¹⁴ He did however express doubts to Skrine, one of his closest confidants amongst the masters, on an afternoon walk. Skrine recounted later how, after revealing some plans which Thring was making for the further improvement of the school, 'he (Thring) dropped his voice to add: "If we are allowed to go on working together"'.¹⁵

The fears were well founded. On February 20th Thring's diary records:

This morning I have entered once again the valley of the shadow of death, and the dark creeping blackness is coming over us again. Cobb [housemaster of one of the smaller houses in the High Street - one not previously infected] came in to see me before chapel to tell me he was almost sure that he had a case of typhoid in his house. Poor fellow! He quite broke down as he told me... The town has...neither flushed the drains nor disinfected them, done nothing except the ventilators they were compelled to put in...¹⁶

And so the roller-coaster of hope and despair began all over again. Lessons had been learned from the previous outbreak; this time notices were immediately sent to all parents to inform them of the exact state of affairs. All boys in Cobb's house were sent home, and Thring braced himself for a rapid exodus of many from other houses. It was not quite as bad as that, thanks partly to the fact that a suspected case in Haslam's house nearby subsequently proved negative. The scare prompted a visit of

¹⁴ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 31: Thring's diary 6 February 1876.

¹⁵ Skrine, JH: *A Memory of Edward Thring* (1890) p. 176.

¹⁶ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 32: Thring's diary 20 February 1876.

two other housemasters (Bagshawe and Christian) to the RSA to demand action, and they reported that the guardians 'seemed frightened at the gathering storm'. Their demand seems to have been successful too, for Thring noted on the 22nd: 'For the first time today the sewers have been examined and found foul enough to account for any fever. The rector was hauled to see it, and has heard some plain truths too, I understand'.¹⁷

The Uppingham parents were 'wonderfully steady' at this moment; only one wrote critically. Mr Jacob and a number of Liverpool families sent a demand to Sclater Booth for urgent action from the LGB. Tarbotton reported that he had been back with a medical expert to check that all was well with the house improvements. Thring spent the whole of the 28th closeted with Jacob and Birley (one of whose sons had been a new boy that term) while he wrote a new memorandum to the LGB; these two gentlemen would still support him even if other trustees kept their distance. Dr Bell meanwhile was trying to assure at least one parent (a Mr Dalison) that his son did not have typhoid (although, typically, he was also busying himself in writing to the father of John Millington Sing,¹⁸ asking for help in refuting some of Haviland's recent accusations about him).¹⁹

The *Lancet* now reminded its readers of its earlier doubts about whether the boys should have returned, and repeated Haviland's warnings about premature reassembly.²⁰ Its cautious attitude was supported by suspected new cases in both

¹⁷ Ibid p. 33: Thring's diary 22 February 1876. In Hoyland, Geoffrey: *The Man Who Made a School* (1946) p. 88, it is claimed that the navvies were so disgusted by what they found that they refused to complete the raising of the covers. This may, however, be based only on rumour.

¹⁸ See ch. 5 section 6.

¹⁹ Bell: *Letterbook* 29 February 1876.

²⁰ *Lancet* 26 February 1876.

Mullins and Christian's houses during that week, although Dr Beale, called up rapidly from London, reported no cause for alarm, as there was no evidence that the fever was connected with the house itself. However, a few days later came news that one of Campbell's boys in Lorne House, whose parents had taken him home, had now developed the symptoms. Thring wrote on March 3rd that 'I feel quite sure this is the beginning of the end'. He expected that 'the school will slip away like a wreath of snow'. He fulminated against Rector Wales: 'The chancellor's letters furnish us with an admirable barometer of what to expect from the powers that be in this place'.²¹ The *Lancet* reported 'a case of enteric fever or two in the town itself'.²²

It was inevitable now that anxiety (and further withdrawals) would gradually increase. A letter from Dr Bell on March 4th indicates that a number of boys had been to see him fearing (wrongly as it turned out) that they had the disease.²³ Telegrams began to arrive in large numbers from worried parents. Letters from Dr Bell to other parents show that he was again on the defensive, notably in his dealings with Mr White of Bury St Edmunds, and with Mr White's GP there, over a boy's diarrhoea symptoms and the circumstances in which he had been sent home. This dispute provoked a lengthy exchange of letters.²⁴ There had been a complaint that Bell had not spotted signs of typhoid; parental doubts over his competence had not gone away.

2) FURTHER APPROACHES TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD

If the LGB hoped that a new year would bring less activity from Uppingham, events soon proved otherwise, for another round of acrimonious disputes followed. In the

²¹ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 35: Thring to Birley 3 March 1876.

²² *Lancet* 4 March 1876.

²³ Bell: *Letterbook* 4 March 1876.

²⁴ *Ibid*: Bell to White 5 and 7 March 1876.

first week of 1876 it received a petition from the town bookseller John Hawthorn, protesting against Haviland having leaked his enquiry findings ahead of publication. Hawthorn claimed that he could easily have collected many more signatures, and that people in the town hoped that the complaint would be vigorously pursued. Close on its heels arrived a copy of a resolution passed by the RSA condemning Hawthorn for his criticisms of Haviland, and stating:

In the opinion of this committee, Mr Haviland, as Medical Officer of Health, has merely done his duty in investigating the cause of the late outbreak of typhoid; having perfect confidence in his integrity and ability they are prepared to sustain him in his course of action.²⁵

It also heard more from Dr Bell. The new year was only two days old when Bell wrote to Sclater Booth demanding to see an advance copy of Haviland's report to discover whether (and how) he was criticised. At that stage the LGB itself had not seen a copy, because the RSA had not yet sent it one. Thring also contacted London - he too was keen to know what Haviland would say; the trustees were due to meet shortly and would want to make a decision about recalling the school, based on all available information. Rawlinson advised the LGB that since the school had implemented the proposals which both he and Tarbotton had recommended, nothing which Haviland might say about what had now become past history could materially affect this decision. In the circumstances, on January 17th the Board decided that the best thing to do was to dispatch to Thring a copy of what Rawlinson had written.²⁶

²⁵ PRO/TNA MH12/9816: RSA resolution 26 January 1876.

²⁶ Ibid: LGB to Thring 17 January 1876.

But this action predictably outraged the RSA. It wrote on the 19th of its ‘astonishment’ that the Board had sent a copy of Rawlinson’s report to the school - without prior consultation and before Haviland’s report was ready. Its protest did have one positive outcome - an urgent journey to London by Barnard Smith himself to deliver a copy of what Haviland had written. But this visit also provoked extreme irritation in London. Rawlinson let fly in an internal memo with a fierce denunciation of what the town had failed to do in previous years, and of how little it had done in the previous few months, in contrast to the school’s rapid action in hiring Tarbotton. He added:

It appears that the local authority and Mr Haviland think far too much about the school and far too little about the town, as it is clear that the school drainage was retarded by the defective state of the sewers. If these had been perfect, the Revd Mr Hodgkinson need not have constructed the cesspits he was advised were necessary”²⁷

But the RSA remained unappeased. It wrote again on Feb 3rd complaining that it had ‘not received the courtesy and support which they might have expected from the Board, and without which their exertions, however strenuous and honest, are rendered in a great degree inoperative’.²⁸

Things became no better for the LGB once Haviland’s report was made public. Bell now disputed Haviland’s charges point by point, in a long letter to Sclater Booth on February 5th:

²⁷ Ibid: Rawlinson memorandum to LGB 29 January 1876.

²⁸ Ibid: WH Brown to LGB 3 February 1876.

The whole report is open to very severe and just criticism: it contains much that it would have been well to omit, it quibbles over trifles, it enters so extensively into personalities in a manner so much to be regretted, it is so voluminous that the only important part – the cause of the outbreak – is almost lost, in fact I believed an efficient report would have been made in 6 pages instead of 46.²⁹

The LGB decided not to send this letter on to Haviland, and merely stated that it could not take sides between the two doctors.³⁰ Mullins weighed in at much the same time, sending the LGB a copy of a letter of complaint he had written to Haviland about the latter's comments on the size of his dormitories in West Deyne, and refuting his allegations that infected boys had been allowed to enter other houses.³¹

The RSA then returned to the attack. It criticised Rawlinson for stating that his report had been drawn up in response to demands from the masters and the trustees. It claimed that the trustees had never been involved (a fact finally confirmed to the LGB by Mr Guy, their clerk, as late as March 25th: he did not move fast). The masters (according to the RSA) had acted wrongly in asking it to take action, and then going behind its back to the LGB. It disputed Rawlinson's view that the school had completed its improvements, claiming that as late as January 18th nothing had been done at the sanatorium, not even the emptying of cesspits.

The RSA also asserted that it had been promised that Rawlinson's report would not be published before Haviland and Field had completed their work, and even criticised the

²⁹ Ibid: Bell to LGB 5 February 1876.

³⁰ Ibid: Bell to LGB 5 February 1876.

³¹ UA: Mullins to Haviland 12 February 1876.

way in which Rawlinson had gone about his investigation: 'He visited the town only once, and that for four hours. And this is called a royal commission!' Rawlinson again told the LGB privately that the RSA was more concerned to protect its own reputation in respect of past events than to put things right.³²

By now it was late February and news was filtering through of the new typhoid cases in the school. A new figure emerges in the LGB's files; Mr Joseph Rayner wrote on behalf of the Liverpool parents, who had been notably more supportive of the school during this second outbreak than during the first one. He contrasted the activity of the school in recent weeks with the inactivity of the RSA, and demanded that the LGB exercise its rarely-used powers to order sewerage improvements in the town.³³ The LGB asked Thring for confirmation that the disease had reappeared. He sent this on February 28th, in an explosion of anguish spread over no fewer than fifteen sides of paper. There was great alarm at the school (he said); Tarbotton had been called in again, but the town had done nothing; sewers remained unflushed and the wells were still dangerous.³⁴

During the first fortnight of March Thring was in touch with the LGB three times about new cases – first in Mullins' house, then in Christian's and finally in his own on 13th March. Worse still, he had to report that the new well which the school had sunk outside the town for its own use had been pronounced unsafe by experts.³⁵ All this had convinced him that there was no alternative to breaking up once again on March 14th. Just as he had done a few weeks earlier when the school had to close in

³² TNA MH12/9816: LGB internal memorandum 18 February 1876.

³³ Ibid: Joseph Rayner to LGB 22 February 1876.

³⁴ Ibid: Thring to LGB 28 February 1876.

³⁵ Ibid: Thring to LGB 7 March 1876.

November, he attempted to imply that it was the LGB's responsibility to act on behalf of the school: 'It is for the London authorities to determine what course of action should be taken that will enable the school to return with safety to Uppingham' ³⁶ He had little hope that the LGB would do so, for he was increasingly aware of its non-interventionist philosophy.

Meanwhile Haviland had been active. He reported to the RSA on how his return to Uppingham to investigate this second outbreak had been received by the school. The welcome had not been warm, and he hoped that the RSA would inform the LGB about it. He had gone there as soon as other commitments allowed, but meanwhile he had sent Mr James, the inspector of nuisances, to see Cobb (in whose house the latest problems had started):

Mr Cobb being at school and engaged until 12 noon, Mr James called again At 12.10 and found Mr Cobb at home. He then delivered my message to which Mr Cobb replied that 'he would meet Mr Haviland either in the street or at the Falcon [Hotel] but he would not see him at his house.' I declined to meet him either in the street or at the Falcon and said I would only meet him at his house, where the enquiry must necessarily be made. Mr Cobb's reply to my message was: 'His compliments, and he had nothing to say'. ³⁷

The RSA went zealously into action. A copy went straight to the LGB – which noted: 'It is most unfortunate that so much ill-feeling exists between the school and the sanitary authority, as it entirely prevents any co-operation between them in the present

³⁶ Ibid: Thring to LGB 28 February and 7 March 1876.

³⁷ Ibid: Haviland to LGB 2 March 1876.

emergency'.³⁸ The LGB then sent a further copy off to Thring, and waited to see the result.

Thring replied almost at once. Cobb's account of the exchange was (he claimed) somewhat different: there must be some misunderstanding. Cobb had merely been informed that Haviland was back in the town, and he had said that he had no reason to meet him; there had been no suggestion that Cobb would not speak to Haviland at the house. Thring was keen to defend his beleaguered housemaster, although he did concede that the misunderstanding was not helpful, and that in retrospect perhaps things could have been handled better. He justified Cobb's actions by adding: 'But when we admitted Mr Haviland in October last to *all* our houses, he took advantage of it to make statements about our inner life'. Haviland had also visited their houses without their knowledge. He was keen to emphasise that the school had nothing to hide, and he had now given orders that Haviland might go wherever he chose. 'I wish in all things to show respect to authority', he wrote, and he expressed regret if any contrary impression had been given.³⁹

Two days later Barnard Smith announced that he would be in London and would call on the LGB again that very afternoon.⁴⁰ He assured it that he was very anxious to clear the way for 'immediate action', now that there were three new cases in the school. Judging by the LGB's notes, this was a more cordial and constructive meeting than their previous one. Encouraged by Barnard Smith's declaration of intent, and advised by Sir John Simon that evidence of the cause of the latest problems might be lost unless prompt action was taken - a view supported in an intervention by telegram

³⁸ Ibid: LGB note on Brown's memorandum 8 March 1876.

³⁹ Ibid: Thring to LGB 8 March 1876.

⁴⁰ Ibid: Barnard Smith to LGB 8 March 1876.

from Sir Henry Thring - the LGB arranged for Dr Power from its medical inspectorate to be sent down to Uppingham. However, this visit had subsequently to be postponed when Power's mother became ill.⁴¹

But only a day later came another lengthy communication – this time from the RSA. It had reverted to its earlier tone: it was wronged and misunderstood. It rebutted all recent criticism of its perceived inactivity and stated:

The sanitary authority have met with antagonism where they had every right to expect co-operation, While they have been endeavouring to do all that existing circumstances allowed, they have been condemned as supine, indifferent and inactive'.⁴²

The reasons for this change of heart are not clear. The LGB eventually told the RSA on April 6th that it could make no useful comment on this polemic. It emphasised its impartiality, and awaited the next tirade. Meanwhile it had been engaged with the Brown over a host of routine matters. These included queries about whether the expenses of recent enquiries could be settled by post office order, details of a disputed surcharge as a result of a recent audit (which, keen not to inflame tempers any further, it eventually used special powers to remit) and advice on whether or not there would be a conflict of interest if the son of a RSA member were allowed to tender for the milk contract at the Uppingham workhouse. No wonder that the LGB was overworked, if it had to deal with such diverse local minutiae.

⁴¹ Ibid: LGB papers 15 March 1876.

⁴² Ibid: RSA to LGB 9 March 1876.

With no sign of a respite in the recurring disputes between the school, the RSA, the LGB, Bell and Haviland, it was hard to see how the situation might be resolved, and progress made. Yet for the school to do nothing at this point would only make its ultimate demise more likely. It was time for some radical new thinking.

This was unlikely to come from the LGB, which was also pursuing its policy of minimum intervention in local matters elsewhere. On April 11th the *Times* carried a report on Question Time in the House of Commons. In response to a question about the typhoid outbreak in Eagley, near Bolton, which had captured a number of recent headlines, Sclater Booth replied that the LGB had decided there would not be a public enquiry there. He justified this on the grounds that 'The sanitary authority seemed to be discharging their duty remarkably well, and they were engaged in prosecuting inquiries of their own through the agency of their medical officer and other skilled persons'. After its recent Uppingham experience, it is hardly surprising that the LGB had decided to continue its policy of non-interference in local affairs as far as possible.

3) REMOVAL OF THE SCHOOL ALTOGETHER?

It is unlikely that the LGB had grasped the full import of Thring's message on March 7th. In it he informed its officials that the school would be breaking up prematurely again, and he added: 'It is for the London authorities to determine what course of action should be taken that will enable the school to return with safety to Uppingham'.⁴³ A quite unexpected new debate, born out of desperation, had now begun to take place amongst the masters.

⁴³ Ibid: Thring to LGB 7 March 1876.

Talk of migration to a place away from Uppingham altogether seems to have begun around March 4th. Credit is generally given to William Campbell of Lorne House (next to Mullins house in the High Street, and only a hundred yards from Cobb's) for being the first to articulate this possibility at a housemasters' meeting, with his memorable question: *Don't you think we ought to flit?*⁴⁴ He was a man of long experience, not easily given to flights of fancy,⁴⁵ and the idea began to gain supporters. It was explained by Thring in a letter to his brother, Sir Henry.⁴⁶ He reflected on how much more vulnerable Uppingham was in such a situation compared with better-known schools like Marlborough and Winchester:

We cannot hold the school together much longer; I doubt whether Tuesday next will see us with a third of the boys left here. They are melting away. The town will do practically nothing. This is ruin. We are thinking if we are deserted of migrating to the Lakes and getting all our classes together there till the summer, just to keep the school connection going.

He needed to seek the backing of those trustees who were likely to be supportive. Jacob and Birley agreed to meet him in Manchester to discuss the idea on March 7th. Birley told him that he had been contacted by the editor of one of the Manchester newspapers, who was being besieged by parents wishing to place adverts in their search for private tutors and alternative schools. But Birley also knew of a hotel

⁴⁴ Skrine, JH: *A Memory* p. 176. Skrine described it in romantic terms: "Then someone spoke the right word: '*Don't you think we ought to flit?*' The school can't stay here: let's take it somewhere else.' There was a spark on tinder. 'It's a big thing,' thought we. 'I'll do it!' said the chief." Skrine was not a housemaster, but he appears to have been at the meeting, possibly deputising for someone else.

⁴⁵ It was Campbell who was asked to oversee the school's interregnum between Thring's death in 1887 and the arrival of his successor.

⁴⁶ Parkin. *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 37: Thring to Sir Henry Thring 4 March 1876.

keeper in Wales who was keen to get the school. This idea immediately caught Thring's imagination; he assured Birley that the housemasters were unanimous in supporting Campbell's idea for a temporary, uprooting of the school along these lines.

In saying this, he omitted to mention that there were doubters. Rawnsley, for one, was strongly opposed to another term being ended prematurely, and it must be likely the innately cautious and conservative Earle viewed even a temporary removal elsewhere with deep misgiving.⁴⁷ But Sam Haslam saw things differently. He wrote to a Norfolk parent (Mr Copeman) that migration was the only way for the School to survive: 'If we do not assemble somewhere while the work is being done, the School will surely vanish, or nearly so, the boys being absorbed by other schools and tutors'. He added: 'And among other incidental advantages, not the least is the good likely to accrue to every boy's character who shall come and share our difficulties in this crisis... so we hope for the confidence and support of all parents'.⁴⁸

Once back in Uppingham, Thring wrote to AC Johnson, the chairman of the trustees, on March 8th. Johnson had already been informed about the idea of moving; he had given Thring a free hand *in principle* on the question, but he now needed to know the details of what was proposed. He would have to persuade the other trustees - if he could. Thring reported to Johnson that he had returned from his visit to Birley, and:

...that the school will break up for its Easter holidays on Tuesday next, and that we shall reassemble in three weeks' time...in some healthy locality away

⁴⁷ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 39: Thring's diary 7 March 1876.

⁴⁸ UA: Letter from S Haslam 9 March 1876.

from Uppingham. Most probably Borth, near Aberystwyth....⁴⁹

Within a few days both local and national papers and The *BMJ* were reporting that the plan would become reality.⁵⁰ The *Lancet*, in contrast to its rival the *BMJ*, (which had deplored the fact that the school had been allowed to reassemble in January, before Haviland had given his specific sanction by declaring that everything possible had been done to prevent a recurrence of the epidemic),⁵¹ expressed sympathy for the school – but it did not mention Thring's plan to move. Its target for criticism on this occasion was Rawlinson who, it said, had been:

...fully aware of Mr Haviland's doubts [about the School reassembling in January] and assumed a great responsibility in speaking so decidedly with respect to the sanitary improvements... The school authorities are therefore greatly to be pitied; they asked advice, and they spent their money freely in improvements, and now they have a second visitation which, we fear, must cause them severe pecuniary loss...⁵²

The trustees had yet to meet as a body to consider the issue. A few were very hostile as soon as they heard rumours of it – notably Wales, who perhaps understood the likely impact on the town better than those who lived some distance away. Thring wrote to Birley on March 8th: 'The rector has put his foot into it, having prevented a

⁴⁹ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 41: Thring to Johnson 8 March 1876.

⁵⁰ *Mercury* 10 March 1876.

⁵¹ *BMJ* 26 February 1876.

⁵² *Lancet* 11 March 1876.

meeting of the trustees being called by saying there was no need. And he has already been using threats against us for our action. Let them do their worst'.⁵³

It lay within the trustees' constitutional powers to stop the plan, but some of them disagreed with Wales, realizing that to do so would almost certainly have meant the school's permanent closure. Thring recorded that in the days leading up to the meeting:

The rector was sententious and threatening to one of the masters. 'The trustees would stop it all.' He might just as well try to stop a train with his finger. All the masters are unanimous. Legal or illegal, the only thing left is to do it in the best way. Change of air is the only possible prescription.⁵⁴

A special general meeting of the trustees took place on March 11th (four days later than the masters had wished).⁵⁵ The minute book tells us very little:

...A statement of the Rev Edward Thring to the chairman in reference to the second outbreak of typhoid fever in the school was produced and read...⁵⁶ and that in consequence the trustees sanction the proposal of the headmaster to break it up."⁵⁷

⁵³ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 39: Thring to Birley 5 March 1876.

⁵⁴ Ibid p. 40: Thring to Birley 8 March 1876.

⁵⁵ Skrine: *A Memory* p. 179.

⁵⁶ They were evidently unwilling to admit that, if one counted Hawke's death in June 1875, this was in fact the *third* outbreak.

⁵⁷ UA: Trustees' Minute Book 11 March 1876.

Behind that bald statement lies a lot more dispute and acrimony. The decision ‘that the masters be requested to furnish the trustees with a statement of the amount of space allowed to each boy in the dormitories and the provision for ventilation suggests that the trustees wished to assert their authority, and that they would make no concessions to all the other problems the staff were facing at that moment. It also implied that they were taking Haviland’s criticisms very seriously. Such equivocal backing was unlikely to endear them to Thring and his staff.

In the trustees’ defence, it is clear that they resented being presented with what appeared to be a *fait accompli* – and the fact that Thring seemed to have briefed the newspapers before consulting them.⁵⁸ Both the *Stamford Mercury* and the *Manchester Critic* had carried a report the previous day suggesting that reassembly of the school was planned to take place ‘in three weeks’ time at some healthy locality away from Uppingham’ and *The Times* had picked up the story that very day. The *Mercury* knew enough to tell its readers that the move was likely to be ‘either to North Wales or the Lakes’.⁵⁹ The fact that the chairman (Johnson) stepped down from the chair (in favour of Fludyer) for the second part of the meeting indicates that he was under criticism for exceeding his powers in encouraging the idea, and that as a body the trustees were seriously divided.⁶⁰ Whatever they decided now about the proposed plan, their position could clearly be only provisional, pending further developments and more information.⁶¹ In the end they recorded no formal decision, but Thring’s diary suggests a robust debate:

⁵⁸ Skrine: *A Memory* pp. 179-180.

⁵⁹ *Mercury* 10 March 1876: *Manchester Critic* 10 March 1876: *Times* 11 March 1876.

⁶⁰ UA: Trustees’ Minute Book 11 March 1876.

⁶¹ Hoyland: *The Man Who Made a School* p. 85 suggests that Thring threatened to resign if they prevented the school from moving; but again Hoyland gives no evidence.

The first battle of the new campaign fought today, and on the whole won. The trustees have sanctioned the break-up of the school, but on ---'s dictation [possibly Wales] would not put on record any expression with reference to the migration; in his own words, 'They knew nothing of the School till it came back again.'

They were, in effect, washing their hands of it, and Thring inveighed against one particular (un-named) objector:

He spoke of the...buildings as burdensome to the trust, and endeavoured, whilst taking over some £14,000 worth of property from our hands, to saddle us with the burden of any occasional deficit on the small outlying debts... Then he brought forward the day boys and the necessity of having a master here. I simply said I should not leave any one of my staff, but if necessary a man might be got to do it. But that they [the day boys] could come with us, and the trustees could pay a fair proportion of their board and lodging. Then he threatened that the trustees would have to cut down the masters' salaries. I quietly pointed out to Mr Finch, who was sitting next to me, that the scheme appointed that the tuition fees must first go to paying the masters.⁶²

The *BMJ* and the *Lancet* both reported the premature end of term, the latter in terms much more supportive to the school than previously.⁶³ On the same day the RSA met and decided to press for a clause in the waterworks bill 'sufficiently to protect the rights and interests of this Authority: and on such a clause being obtained to withdraw

⁶² Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 44: Thring's diary 11 March 1876.

⁶³ *BMJ* and *Lancet* 11 March 1876.

the opposition to the bill'.⁶⁴ Maybe the implications for local trade if the school carried out its plan were becoming apparent to Barnard Smith and his colleagues.

Over the weekend which followed, Thring went through a variety of emotions, ranging from despair to elation:

A quiet day at last. Holy Communion, a very good sermon from Christian in the afternoon. When shall I spend a Sunday again as headmaster in this place? I had a feeling as I stood in chapel to-day, never — never; but then I looked up... and then it came back to me again that much was left, and that even this place, with its deadly blight of dull, dead hearts worse than the typhoid, might breathe new life and remain a light ... One thing I feel more than I have ever felt, that a great shaping power is round about me, guiding, and ruling, and making, and moulding this fierce crucible work and fiery rush of evil and danger, and friendship and help all round about one...⁶⁵

It would be surprising if Thring did not feel both angered and daunted by much of what he had heard at the trustees' meeting. Yet it also strengthened his resolve, for it was increasingly clear that he would have to decide his own destiny. He was buoyed up by the unanimous support of the masters; Earle had withdrawn his earlier doubts, and three others came to pledge their full support, for whatever actions he decided to take. Skrine offered 'to put his salary into my hands'.⁶⁶ The LGB seemed to be taking a closer interest again. Dr Jex-Blake (Headmaster of Rugby) had been in touch to offer help; he would resist any temptation to capitalize on Uppingham's misfortune,

⁶⁴ UA: handwritten minute (n/d).

⁶⁵ Parkin Vol. 2 p. 44: Thring's diary 12 March 1876.

⁶⁶ Ibid: Thring to Jex-Blake 13 March 1876.

and he would discourage parents from transferring their sons to Rugby. His support was timely but others were rallying too; The *Times* published a long letter the next day signed *Pater Alumni*, contrasting the ‘plague-stricken city’ and the supine attitude of the town with the resoluteness and imagination of the school in seeking a new location for itself.⁶⁷

On March 13th, just as a typhoid case was confirmed in his Thring’s own house,⁶⁸ he preached at the end of term service: ‘Difficulties become tests of willingness and strength; all hardship, everything that tries life, when overcome, strengthens life’.⁶⁹ Skrine recorded that ‘It was a day of “wild winds and pitiless snows...that afternoon we are gathered, with thin ranks, for the last time under our chapel roof. In a few hours we shall separate, to meet, who knows certainly where...’⁷⁰

One omen seemed good. The Old Testament lesson read (probably by one of the masters) recounted the wanderings of Jacob in the wilderness. The choice of lesson was not mere theatricality on the Thring’s part, although there were those who did wonder whether this story - with its eventually positive outcome - had been specially chosen. Skrine believed otherwise:

There came in deep tones from the lectern the story of an exile, who at evening lighted on a certain place, and heard in dreams the promise ‘I am with thee and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest and will bring thee again into this land’. There were hands which turned the prayer-book’s leaves

⁶⁷ *Times* 14 March 1876.

⁶⁸ TNA MH12/9816: Thring to LGB 13 March 1876.

⁶⁹ UA: Thring, Edward: *Collected Sermons* Vol. 1 pp. 273-276.

⁷⁰ Skrine: *A Memory* p. 177.

to see if the... lesson were the reader's choice, or (as it did) stood so appointed in the calendar...⁷¹

Thring wrote in his diary that evening that he felt: 'some strange... good and marvellous divine purpose will come out of it all. Tomorrow I start for Liverpool, and on Tuesday for Borth and other places in North Wales. Borth seems likely to suit from a letter of Cobb's this morning'.⁷² His visit to Wales, and the difficult issues which it raised, are described at the start of appendix 5.

4) TOWN AND TRUSTEES

As in the previous autumn the RSA had apparently taken very little initiative as these plans developed and (no doubt) gradually became known locally; little would have been secret in as tight-knit a community as Uppingham. Wales's opposition to them is unsurprising, given his personal coolness towards Thring, and the fact that (unlike many of his fellow-trustees) he lived in the town; he would be able to appreciate better than most the likely economic impact of any prolonged absence by the school. It is also likely that he and Barnard Smith weighed up all the potential difficulties and risks already described which Thring's plan implied – including the logistical challenges, the risks over the recruitment and retention of pupils, the financial demands it would make on the masters and the prospect of uprooting all their families.⁷³ They were no doubt resigned to the continuing wrath of the school, and probably prepared to ride it out.

⁷¹ Skrine: *A Memory* p. 177.

⁷² Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 44: Thring's diary 12 March 1876.

⁷³ See appendix 5.

But where the ratepayers were concerned, in the absence of readily-available funds for wide-ranging improvements to drainage and water supply, the RSA was engaged in an act of brinkmanship; if it continued to do little it risked substantial criticism from the tradesmen if Thring carried out his plans; if it did too much, too soon, it would be lambasted just as fiercely for the rate rises which would follow. It is little wonder that its members were inactive for so long.

Thus in different ways both Thring and the RSA were damned if they acted decisively, but equally damned if they did not.⁷⁴ But by mid-March opinion was stirring in the town, as the prospect of trade lost by the School's absence at last began to sink into the minds of local tradesmen. The RSA received a demand from ratepayers to be allowed to attend its next meeting. Brown (presumably acting on orders from Barnard Smith) attempted to head off the move by saying that the RSA was due to meet a LGB inspector at that meeting, so the idea should 'stand over'.⁷⁵ Undeterred, the same protesters sent a petition to the churchwardens, calling for a ratepayers' meeting to discuss what sanitary improvements the town might need.⁷⁶ The signatories represented a remarkable cross-section of local shopkeepers and suppliers of food, stationery and other services.⁷⁷

The meeting was held on 23rd March and appears to have been heated; rumours were spreading that the RSA might be planning its own water supply at a price which would undercut Thring's scheme. The prospect of low prices might be welcome, but

⁷⁴ Point made in conversation by Dr Elizabeth Hurren.

⁷⁵ UA: Bell to Brown 18 March 1876 and Brown to Bell 20 March 1876.

⁷⁶ UA: Notice to the churchwardens (n/d).

⁷⁷ A fishmonger, ironmonger, wine merchant, photographer, hairdresser, two tailors, two booksellers and three grocers. They included John Hawthorn, and Charles White: the latter's involvement becomes significant in ch. 7 section 2.

what smacked of a spoiling operation against the School on the part of the RSA was not. At the meeting itself the opposition was voiced by supporters of the School - housemasters Candler and Mullins, together with Dr Bell. The shopkeepers and other tradesmen, having signed their petition of protest, appear to have played little active part – this time.

Four motions were passed: firstly that a private water company was preferable to one organized by the RSA; secondly that a surface supply would not do; thirdly that the meeting disapproved of any spending by the RSA on plans for a surface supply, and finally that a copy of these resolutions be sent to the LGB. With great satisfaction, Dr Bell sent just such a copy, on the following day.⁷⁸

The RSA was put further on the defensive by a fresh bout of anonymous press correspondence in the *Times* over three days from March 21st.⁷⁹ *A member of the school* wrote to reiterate how negligent the RSA had been. This was countered by *One of the sanitary authority*, who emphasised what a healthy place the town was (and had always been) and the sense of safety which its inhabitants felt. Revealingly, he also described the debt incurred through past sanitary improvements and the costs which present and future developments implied; it said much about his motives. Otherwise, the letter offered little new by way of argument, and many old charges were repeated.

More conviction seems to appear in the letter carried by the *Manchester Critic* from *One of the townsfolk* later in the week. It chided the paper for its pro-school stance, blamed inadequate bye-laws and ‘legal see-sawing’ for delays in improvements,

⁷⁸ UA: note (n/d), confirmed by letter in Bell: *Letterbook* 23 and 24 March 1876.

⁷⁹ *Times* 21-22-23 March 1876.

pointed out that the speed of response from the Uppingham authorities was rather more rapid than when the writer had himself lived in Manchester some years earlier, and (alarmingly for Thring) sought to sow the seeds of doubt as to whether Borth would turn out to be a safer haven from disease than Uppingham had been.⁸⁰

But for Thring the die was cast. Only one immediate hurdle remained: the trustees again. They reassembled on March 24th in a mood of deep wariness. Motions were passed encouraging the RSA to carry out all Rogers Field's proposals, banning any housemaster from taking more than 30 boarders and stating that no boys who had been in a house where infectious illness had broken out should be allowed to return without the headmaster's permission. Even allowing for the dire threat to the School they governed, for Thring, whose resistance of interference in management matters which had become so acute over the years, such decisions must have been intolerable.

The trustees dealt him a series of further blows. On being told formally that he had arranged for the school's removal to Borth, they resolved to put just £50 at his disposal to defray the costs of travel, board and lodging incurred by the day-boys who would be going with them. This was far from enough to cover such an outlay,⁸¹ and only half the sum which they agreed at the same meeting should be given to their clerk for all the unusual extra work which he had recently had to do – a meeting at which they approved other grants for routine expenditure of over £1000.⁸² They declined to make any decision over whether to grant travel costs to the masters. They had decided to be trustees of the school *at Uppingham* in the most literal sense of the

⁸⁰ *Manchester Critic* 24 March 1876.

⁸¹ Especially in view of the charges agreed with the owner of the Cambrian Hotel, Borth - Mr Mytton. Appendix 5 shows the scale of what Thring had to set up in Borth before the village would be even a temporarily suitable base for the school.

⁸² Trustees' Minute Book 24 March 1876.

term, with no firm commitment to how they would react to future events. Maybe they reckoned that, as they controlled only about two-fifths of the school's total annual expenditure, Thring and the housemasters should look to themselves.⁸³ Even so, their apparent decision to withhold even the boarders' tuition fees suggests both a deep hostility to Thring's plans and a dereliction of their responsibility to the school in the face of emergency.⁸⁴

Thring tried to see it all in more positive terms, writing in his diary: 'I feel so grateful at the deliverance from the town and the having time once more at our disposal. It is like an escape out of prison. Things may be hard at Borth; there must be much difficulty, but it is the hardness of liberty, not the close deadly grip of a prison'.⁸⁵ Even so, there was no disguising the fact that effectively he was to be on his own.

5) CONCLUSION

At the end of March it remained to be seen whether for the School, it would be a case of moving out of the frying pan and into the fire. For the town in this period the effect of the School's absence, and how long that absence would last, were causes for deep uncertainty. The RSA showed little urgency, and remained caught more than ever between its desire to make improvements and its unwillingness to face their cost – or to have them dictated by Thring. It remained to be seen whether its members would rue its lack of initiative and its failure to give comfort to the school over the previous

⁸³ See ch.1 section 4. The boarding fees amounted to £21,000, the tuition fees to £9,000 and the charity income to £4,280.

⁸⁴ The evidence on this issue is unclear. The Trustees' Minute Book (24 March 1876) makes no mention of what was to happen to these fees; given that Thring believed they were in the trustees control rather than his (see chapter 1, section 4), we have to assume that they were withheld. This would also seem consistent with Thring's later claim that he and the masters had incurred nearly £4,000 in lost fees: see appendix 6.

⁸⁵ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 46: Thring's diary 19 March 1876.

year, or whether Thring might be forced to abandon all the buildings he had erected and paid for in Uppingham, allowing them to be repossessed by the trustees for a restored day school – although the boarding houses would have become strange and under-used monuments to the past in a town which would have had little use for them in such circumstances.

Thring's leadership and improvisational skills at Borth from April 1876 are summarized in appendix 5. It was just conceivable that he would eventually be forced into a humiliating retreat back to Uppingham with his sanitary and water supply aims still unachieved. Some members of the RSA believed this to be a possibility,⁸⁶ although it is unlikely that Thring ever considered this to be an option. But he must also have wondered in his darker moments how likely it was that the school would survive at all. The true depth of the antipathies between school and town over the previous months had now become fully apparent – and with them the inability of the LGB to bring the two parties back together.

⁸⁶ See ch. 2 section 5.

CHAPTER 7 - SUMMER 1876

This chapter deals with the six-month period immediately after the school's departure. Initially it was thought that Thring and his pupils would soon be back, but as spring gave way to summer it became increasingly apparent that the stakes were rising for both sides in the dispute. The exodus to Borth had been a dramatic and unexpected decision, but it had done nothing to resolve the stand-off between Thring and the RSA, or to address the causes of the recent health problems.

Throughout the early weeks of this period Thring was so preoccupied with setting up the school in Borth that he was comparatively uninvolved in continuing the pressure on the RSA over the key questions of sanitation and water supply. As a result, the RSA was able to proceed at a comparatively measured pace, despite the best efforts of Dr Bell to instil a sense of urgency.

Towards the end of the summer term, however, and through the summer holidays, the School became increasingly frustrated by the Authority's inactivity – to the point at which in July and August it began to bring pressure to bear from as many powerful individuals as it could. In this sense the RSA's resentment of the school's powerful friends was well founded. This coincided with attempts by some ratepayers to assert themselves as the prospect of business failures increased.

1) THE STATE OF THE PARTIES

Barely three weeks after Campbell first suggested that they might 'flit', Thring and his staff left the town. They had very little time to pack up any personal possessions and equipment, and to arrange for their houses to be looked after while they were

away. Thring and Christian had also made arrangements for further tests to be done on their house water supplies.¹ The absence of the school turned the attention of the townspeople powerfully on to the RSA, as it tried to gauge the state of local opinion, and to decide how radically and how quickly to address the sanitary problems.

The Lower School pupils remained in Uppingham, despite (or perhaps because of) all the traumas of the previous autumn. We cannot be sure whether Hodgkinson himself decided not to go with Thring (sensing either that it was the wrong decision, or that younger boys were too vulnerable to be uprooted from familiar surroundings), or whether Thring persuaded him to stay in Uppingham, because of the shortage of accommodation at Borth.² Medically speaking, it was a strange decision – given the extreme vulnerability of younger boys in particular to this type of disease.

Nearly all parties to the dispute had a great deal to lose. Thring and the masters began to incur sizeable running costs down in Borth as the school-in-exile took shape. They hoped to be back for the September term with improvements, but this was quickly shown to be a hopelessly optimistic timescale. Even if the reassuring number of pupils who turned up at Borth for the summer term guaranteed the school's future for a while, the masters themselves faced possible personal ruin as they went more deeply into a venture which was unplanned and unbudgeted-for. Thring had started the legal and administrative mechanisms for the new water company, but they were as yet incomplete.³ He had failed so far to force the RSA to accelerate drainage improvements. He had no means of knowing what pressure the trustees might exert on him in the weeks ahead.

¹ UA: unsigned document 13 April 1876. It showed results from two boarding houses.

² Mr CM Hodgkinson, a descendant, told the author in 1976 that he was sure it was the latter.

³ See this ch. section 3.

For the trustees the school's absence represented a new financial headache. Whatever their recent pronouncement about being responsible only for the school *at Uppingham*, they were responsible to the Charity Commissioners for its proper administration. The exodus raised the prospect of more work for them, caused by a headmaster who had given them plenty of worry over the years. Their social standing locally would not be improved if the school's fortunes suffered in the long term.

It seems highly likely that for many townspeople the prospect of the school's absence brought pressing economic concerns.⁴ As ratepayers, they had plenty to fear if radical action was taken. A rapid upgrading of Uppingham's sanitation would have a big impact on them, and any piped water supply (whether provided by the RSA itself or by a private company led by Thring or anyone else) had cost implications for the new consumers.

Yet if little was done, they faced a crippling loss of trade, as farmers, traders or shopkeepers, through the absence of the town's largest business and employer. Few of them had foreseen events taking this turn, certainly not so soon – and the school's departure seems to have made them very uncertain. If the school were to be away for only a term, the shopkeepers felt that they could ride out the financial consequences, but a longer absence – perhaps until Christmas – might be a different matter. It is likely that they reckoned that Thring could not hold out that long.

⁴ See the links between town and school described in ch. 1 section 3.

Barnard Smith, Wales and the other guardians thus had to strike a delicate balance, to ensure that ratepayers and traders would not turn on them either for negligent inactivity or for expensive over-activity. They did not dispute that improvements were needed, but they would not be rushed into decisions that they might later regret or which might leave them open to criticism of profligacy if rates were subsequently increased. Details, estimates, tenders and loan arrangements needed to be properly worked out, even if this took time. But they also needed to show that things were moving, albeit slowly – otherwise any combination of the townspeople, the school, the LGB and the press might revive the pressure on them.

Barnard Smith and Wales seem to have had few qualms about exploiting the school's situation, and may even have taken some satisfaction in doing so. They were confident that Thring had over-reached himself. They would wait to see how he fared at Borth. They knew that the Trustees were not prepared to put large-scale finance into the scheme, and they would have made rough estimates of the bills that Thring was now incurring. Mrs Bell recorded that 'some of the guardians and their supporters were saying that nothing would be done, and Mr Thring would have to bring the school back to the town as he left it'.⁵ If he were forced into a humiliating return, either because his funds had run out or because Borth proved to have diseases of its own, the pressure on the RSA would surely diminish, at least for a while. There were some advantages in procrastination, provided that they could keep the ratepayers quiescent.

⁵ UA: this undated account of events at this time is signed 'Alice M. Bell' and may well have been written a long time later.

The guardians may also have felt daunted, even overwhelmed, by the legal, financial and technical issues which confronted them – and by the fear of making public and costly mistakes.⁶ This would explain why they apparently sought to carry out their procedural responsibilities to the letter, regardless of how long this took. They could comfort themselves with the thought that typhoid in the town was no worse than in previous years. They could point to the fact that Hodgkinson and the Lower School had remained in situ, and that his house had not suffered any further illness during the renewed outbreak of typhoid after Christmas. Perhaps things really were improving of their own accord now that increased flushing of sewers and clearing of drains were being carried out.

On the other hand defeat (real or perceived) for the RSA at Thring's hands by rapidly acceding to all his demands might seem to be not just a real humiliation to the guardians, some of whom had given many years of public service; it might also be a threat to their local prestige and influence. Whatever the guardians' view, they were certainly under pressure. Barnard Smith, after so long as chairman, seemed to have wearied of all the months of confrontation some time earlier; he had again told the guardians (on March 29th) that he wished to retire⁷ but 'consented in the present condition of affairs connected with the Union to be re-elected'.⁸ The majority of the members of the RSA were happy to sit tight as long as they needed to. Dr Bell and a few others might object, but for the moment at least, they were in a minority.

⁶ Hamlin, Christopher: 'Mudding in Bumbledom: on the Enormity of Large Sanitary Improvements in Four British towns 1855-1885', *Victorian Studies* 32 (1988) pp. 55-83, and in ch. 2 section 6.

⁷ See ch. 2 section 5.

⁸ ROLLR DE1381/441: Poor Law papers 29 March 1876.

Finally, there were consequences for the LGB officials. For them, Uppingham was just one of many local problems requiring their attention - a comparatively small town with (statistically) a small typhoid outbreak – but one which had already given them a great deal of work. All their instincts were still to avoid taking sides. But there were implications for their credibility and reputation if a desperate school with powerful contacts and a wounded and resentful RSA united to blame them at a later stage. It proved increasingly impossible for them to remain detached in the months which followed, as appeals and memoranda continued to arrive from both sides.

Dr Bell had remained in Uppingham rather than going with the school to Borth. He could not desert his town patients - and to do so would in all probability have resulted in his practice rapidly being eroded by his two rival doctors. Despite the school's absence however, he was still its medical officer, and it fell to him to write letters to parents of boys who had previously had mild typhoid at Uppingham and who now needed his permission to send them back to the school at Borth.⁹ But he quickly heard of Childs's appointment as school medical officer *at Borth*,¹⁰ and he realised that his position too might be under threat in the long-term. If the school closed, or stayed away permanently, his role would end. Meanwhile Childs, not he, would have Thring's ear.

Bell corresponded with several housemasters at this time, to reassure them about the sanitary state of their empty houses.¹¹ It suited him that Thring had asked him to do

⁹ UA: Bell, Thomas: *Letterbook* 1876-1904: Bell to MH Dobson 29 April 1876.

¹⁰ Ibid: Bell to Thring 15 April 1876. Childs had originally been recruited as sanitary officer, some months before the exodus to Borth was first mooted. See ch. 4 section 7.

¹¹ Ibid: 30 March, 15 April and 3 June 1876: Bell wrote to Bagshawe about this watching brief, having feared for some time that Bagshawe lacked confidence in him. Bagshawe, however, replied accepting the idea quite readily.

this; he was fearful of losing housemaster confidence, and of becoming (along with the RSA) their scapegoat for recent events. He also lobbied Thring regularly by letter in this period for reassurance that his position was safe. His insecurity shows particularly in a letter that he wrote to Thring on April 15th expressing misgivings about the housemasters' view of him, and wondering if some of them might ask one of the other doctors in the town to have this watching brief.¹²

His fears in fact proved unfounded, but the combination of his longstanding loyalty and his insecurity had one positive outcome: it made him highly zealous in the school's cause. He became its main defender in Uppingham, as well as the principal supplier of news to Thring and the housemasters in Borth. His *Letterbook*, along with the LGB papers, is a major source of information about this summer period. Not surprisingly, it gives prominence to everything that Bell did on the school's behalf. It also reveals an inveterate and caustic letter-writer, as well as someone inclined to see conspiracies at every turn.

2) THE LOCAL ELECTIONS: APRIL 1876

Thring's move to Borth had done nothing to stem personal animosities. A telegram which he sent to Christian (who was still in Uppingham) on March 26th read: 'It is flat treason and treachery. I have wired to stop it'.¹³ We do not know to what this refers, but it shows that distance had done little to dispel his resentful and angry mood. There were also new anonymous letters from each side in the press; *A father* wrote at length to the *Manchester Critic* at the end of March, complaining at the lack of urgency

¹² Ibid: Bell to Thring 30 March 1876.

¹³ UA: Thring to Christian 26 March 1876.

being shown.¹⁴ This prompted *One of the townsfolk* to write to the *Stamford Mercury* raising the question of whether Borth would really turn out to be safer than Uppingham.¹⁵

The first edition of the *USM* for the summer term did not help. It included a clever poetical satire: *How I came to Borth*, with the words:

Leave bickerings and cesspools far behind,
Take thy stern future with a quiet mind.
Better are herbs and peace, be well assured,
Than all the Local Sanitary Board
Weigh dilute sewage 'gainst pure mountain springs,
Weigh unflushed drains 'gainst air the salt sea brings
Weigh all the chances well with equal scales,
Since Wales won't come to you then go to Wales...."¹⁶

It did not take long for a copy to find its way to Uppingham, where the rector took offence at the use of his name in this way. Bell wrote to Thring on May 5th urging him to stop the boys writing such things; they would not help, especially at a time when (Bell sensed) public opinion might just be starting to move in favour of the school.¹⁷

These irritations gave an added spice to the annual elections to the RSA which were due in late April. The elections offered both sides a chance to test local opinion, but

¹⁴ *Manchester Critic* 31 March 1876.

¹⁵ *Mercury* 14 April 1876.

¹⁶ *USM* May 1876.

¹⁷ Bell: *Letterbook* 5 May 1876.

also exposed them to potential rejection at the polls. For the school in particular, despatching some old opponents and getting new blood on to the RSA had plenty of attractions. Bell wrote to Jacob that it would be a close-run thing, but he had identified some possibly vulnerable members,¹⁸ and both he and a local solicitor, John Pateman, would be standing for election. As election day approached feelings ran increasingly high; so-called “race pamphlets” were produced – anonymous reports on the election and its likely results, including nicknames such as *Blue Pill* for Bell himself and *Little Awkward* for Barnard Smith.¹⁹

Each side was determined to exploit the voting regulations to the full. Brown (whose role as RSA clerk included running the election) intended to make no allowance for the masters away at Borth, when deciding the length of time between sending out voting papers and holding the count. Thus they risked being disenfranchised. One housemaster (Candler) had written to the LGB before leaving; he had warned of the logistical difficulties of voting from there, but made it clear that the masters were ‘exceedingly interested in the outcome’.²⁰ The LGB replied that it had no authority to intervene; the clerk, as returning officer, had authority to make the necessary arrangements.²¹ The election then became a procedural battle of wits. The RSA decided to send out the ballot papers to the school houses at the last possible moment allowed in law, counting on the fact that it would be all but impossible for the absent masters to cast their votes.

¹⁸ Surprisingly, despite his earlier support for the school, Foster was one of those targeted.

¹⁹ UA: anonymous typed commentary (n/d).

²⁰ PRO/TNA MH12/9816: Candler to LGB 30 March 1876.

²¹ Ibid: the LGB agreed on the same day to an application from the RSA that Brown be given a bonus equivalent to his annual salary, in view of all his recent extra work.

Bell got wind of this. Supporters followed Brown round to each empty boarding house as he delivered the voting slips. They collected them up, and passed them to Charles White, (the ironmonger).²² Joseph Woodcock (arguably the most active guardian opposed to Barnard Smith)²³ provided a dogcart and a pair of horses, and White was taken straight to Rugby station where he caught the last train of the day to Borth. It was a slow one, and he had to travel all night, but on arrival at Borth in the early morning, he found Thring and all the masters on the platform, with tables, pens and ink at the ready.

Mrs Thring brought breakfast down for White to eat on the platform, and within a few minutes (the train having gone down to the terminus at Aberystwyth and come back again), he was on the return train to Rugby. There he was met again by Woodcock – who managed to hand in the voting papers in Uppingham with fifteen minutes to spare. It proved to have been a worthwhile journey. After a few days of dispute over a number of doubtful or spoilt ballot papers, several opponents of the School were voted off. Their replacements included Bell.²⁴ Even allowing for the triumphalist exaggeration of Mrs Bell's account,²⁵ it was an unusual victory and a sweet one for the school. Each side would still go to great lengths to thwart the other.

Bell used his new status to become a sharp thorn in the flesh of those guardians who were happy to see the school suffer. He challenged the size of Brown's salary as

²² He and his father both had close connections with the school: his shop was in High Street East.

²³ See details of his attendance record in appendix 3.

²⁴ Bell: *Letterbook*: Bell to Jacob 13 April 1876.

²⁵ See footnote 5.

clerk.²⁶ He lobbied hard to speed up the formation of the water company and the drainage improvements.

3) THE WATER COMPANY

These weeks also saw a battle over the plan for a private water supplier, as Bell threatened a legal challenge against the RSA's expenses in opposing the water bill. He demanded that the government auditor surcharge the guardians.²⁷

The RSA had been concerned about this issue for some time; it would not only highlight its own failure to provide piped water earlier, but would bring into existence a provider over which it had no technical or legal control. Brown was instructed to do what he could to get clauses written into the Water Bill, protecting the RSA's interests. It was also concerned not to pick up any bill for roadworks caused by pipes being laid. Initially it had no positive ideas about how to tackle either issue: Brown was instructed merely to ignore or stall on both matters. Wales told Bell that 'there was no hurry about it, and that the delay was of no importance'.²⁸

The RSA also asked Rogers Field to come again from London (April 4th). Field reported to the LGB that experimental drilling by the company of new wells to the south of the town was moving forward.²⁹ He had grave doubts, however, about whether the company would find a sufficient supply in that area.³⁰ His pessimism

²⁶ Bell: *Letterbook*: Bell to Brown 6 May 1877. Brown accused him of a vendetta. Bell denied this, but conceded the large extra workload resulting from the Public Health Act of 1875.

²⁷ Bell: *Letterbook*: Bell to Thring 27 April 1876.

²⁸ Ibid: Bell to Beavor 30 March 1876.

²⁹ TNA MH12/9816: Field to LGB 4 April 1876.

³⁰ UA: Matthews, Bryan: 'The Uppingham Water Supply', in Frowde, GC, (ed): *Borth Centenary Magazine* (1977) p. 26. It had bought a field west of the Kettering Road in March 1876, where it proposed to construct a well and water tower, from which mains would be laid into Uppingham. Separated from the town by two valleys, no pollution from drains or cesspits could have affected it.

proved correct. The company dug to a depth of 420 feet, but it could not obtain an adequate and reliable supply. The RSA seized on Field's doubts to query whether the company's plans would provide sufficient water for hydrants to ensure regular flushing of the sewers and to provide fire protection – thus effectively turning the school's own argument about inadequate water supply back on itself.³¹

Bell wrote to warn Birley of what he saw as this mischief-making. This action unfortunately backfired; as the water company began to consider other possible sites, Birley unfortunately let slip a mention of this in Wales's hearing at a trustees' meeting, revealing that further boring work was planned much nearer to the town in the area between the sanatorium and the town workhouse, to the north-west. Wales, whose obligations as a school trustee and as a leading RSA member must have been deeply in conflict, put his interests as a guardian first. He informed Haviland, who stated forcibly that this new site was far too near to sanatorium cesspits which had been so roundly condemned in his report a few months earlier. Haviland conceded that they had been emptied and then filled with quicklime, but they had not been dismantled altogether.³²

By now the RSA had seen the dangers of procrastination and was keen to put up rival proposals in case the water company failed to deliver its promises or to keep its timetable. It asked Field to go beyond merely commenting on the company's proposals, and to investigate the feasibility of a rival water scheme, based on local springs. Field estimated that between 50,000 and 60,000 gallons per day would be needed. He believed that he had found sources that were pure, but less certain of their

³¹ Bell: *Letterbook*: Bell to Birley 5 June 1876.

³² UA: memorandum from Haviland (n/d).

volume. His experiments were not yet complete; he hoped that steam pumping could be avoided, but if individual steam pumps were needed at several sources, the costs would be too great. A great deal depended on rainfall projections.³³

Bell kept abreast of all these developments and acted at times as a go-between for the RSA and the Worksop-based solicitors, Hodding and Beevor, who were acting for the water company. He produced a number of letters with recommendations on the nature of the company share issue,³⁴ and on the progress being made with trial borings.³⁵ He wrote to Beevor himself in an attempt to get assurances for the RSA that the company's water price levels would be reasonable.³⁶ He was also in contact with Mullins at Borth by post, using the latter's keen interest in meteorology to produce rainfall statistics for the weeks earlier in the year. These might be helpful in allaying Field's doubts about the sufficiency of the supply at the site now being proposed.³⁷

But before Field's researches on behalf of the RSA were complete, the LGB made up its mind decisively in support of the private scheme. Forced at last to choose publicly between the school and the RSA, and despite Field's careful appraisal of the technicalities, it concluded in an internal memo dated 7 May entitled *The reasons for favouring the Uppingham water bill*, that the RSA had in fact been opposing the bill without any statutory power to do so. It believed that the Corporation Municipal Funds Act, which had been passed for the purpose of giving such powers to local authorities, did not extend to RSAs (as opposed to their urban counterparts). This was a rich irony, in view of the RSA's repeated demands over many years for urban status.

³³ Bell later disputed these figures, having obtained others from meteorologist Mullins.

³⁴ Bell: *Letterbook*: Bell to Beevor 13 April 1876.

³⁵ Ibid: Bell to Revd JC Peake 14 April 1876.

³⁶ Ibid: Bell to Beevor 4 May 1876.

³⁷ Ibid: Bell to Mullins 5 May 1876.

The LGB sensed that the RSA had shown enthusiasm for Field's ideas only as a spoiling operation against the private water company. It ignored the RSA's legitimate fear that the company's plans might be technically inadequate. The company had [it said] offered to protect the RSA's interest in any reasonable way. There was no guarantee that Field or the RSA could produce a viable alternative scheme, and with the school threatening to remain away from Uppingham until a water supply became a reality, the LGB felt that the bill should go ahead, despite the difficulties which the company was starting to experience on its site at the south end of the town.³⁸

Rawlinson, true to his habit of favouring local autonomy,³⁹ dissented from the LGB's view, feeling that it should support the RSA, despite its previous criticisms of him.

The RSA reacted strongly to this decision, sending a deputation to the LGB on May 13th. Bell had been keen to be a member of this group, not because he agreed with the opposition to the bill, but out of mistrust of what Barnard Smith, Wales and Brown intended.⁴⁰ In the event he seems not to have been included, although he was able to glean information on its return. He wrote to Thring a day or two later, claiming that the two clergymen had been confident that they would win the LGB's support - and had told him so - but to his great satisfaction they had been shocked to find a cold reception from the Board, which had told them to put their house in order⁴¹

The LGB's intervention was decisive in ensuring that the water works suffered no further delays. As the time for the bill to proceed through parliament approached,

³⁸ TNA MH12/9816: LGB internal memo 7 May 1876.

³⁹ Ibid: Rawlinson memorandum 8 May 1876. It seems likely that he and John Lambert saw the situation very differently. See ch. 2 section 7.

⁴⁰ Bell: *Letterbook*: Bell to Jacob 5 May 1876.

⁴¹ Ibid: Bell to Thring 16 May 1876.

there was a final, robust debate amongst the RSA's members about how long and how strongly it could be opposed. In the end they decided – either through shortage of funds, or expertise, or a belated recognition of the town's interests as trade declined – that they could not produce convincing alternative schemes to Thring's private one.

Thus, despite Haviland's opposition, the Uppingham Water Bill had its third reading in the House of Commons on July 3rd ⁴² and received the royal assent on the 13th. ⁴³ It gave Thring and his fellow-directors in the private company (four of them, including Birley and Jacob, plus John Hawthorn as secretary), ⁴⁴ the power to raise capital of £6,000 through shares of £10 each, make borrowings and levy charges up to specified limits. The company had a year in which to provide a proper supply at an appropriate site, after which its power would lapse. Work could now begin in earnest.

4) SEWERAGE IMPROVEMENTS

Sewerage improvements proceeded equally tortuously. It quickly became apparent that they would take far longer than the period of a single school term which Thring had envisaged as he planned his exodus. By early May, Field had lodged his outline sewer proposals with the LGB and Rawlinson had approved them. ⁴⁵ These included the replacement of manhole covers all along the High Street and the installation of flushing boxes at a number of key points, sections of piping laid at greater depths, repairs to parts of the existing systems and new branch sewers between High Street

⁴² *Mercury* 7 July 1876.

⁴³ UA: copy of parliamentary bill.

⁴⁴ The others were Benjamin Hopkins, a town draper, and William Garner Hart, a grocer. Hopkins was the only large-scale employer in the town, and also a leading dissenter. Hart was a grocer, dependent on the custom of the school.

⁴⁵ TNA MH12/9816: LGB papers 19 April 1876.

East (via Queen Street and Adderley Street) down to the large south sewer below the cemetery to the east of the London Road.⁴⁶

Field had stated that he would not be able to complete the drawings for at least six weeks, and it was calculated that sewer works could not begin for three or four months. Tenders would have to be invited and scrutinised, sureties produced, loans agreed, contracts drawn up and contractors' plant hired. Bell disputed this time-scale; he also believed that Field's proposals were based on some very high assumptions about rainfall statistics, and feared that these might become a pretext to slow things down still more.⁴⁷

Then there was a further delay after the LGB announced that it would send a medical inspector to check on progress. This was prompted by concerted pressure from Lord Gainsborough and Sir Charles Adderley⁴⁸ who, as the two largest land and property owners in the town, sought to use their influence on the school's behalf. They sent a three-page formal petition to the LGB urging it to investigate the dilatoriness of the RSA, recounting the reasons for the school's move to Borth and stating that it was essential to have sewerage works completed – ideally by the end of the summer holidays, or by Christmas at the latest.⁴⁹

The RSA was stung by news of what it saw as outside interference and an attempt by Thring to exploit his rich and influential contacts. It returned to the attack, demanding the LGB's full support, and claiming that it had been misrepresented. It repeated its

⁴⁶ Drawings lodged at the Rutland Museum 2005.

⁴⁷ UA: Field to Mullins 5 May 1876.

⁴⁸ Adderley seems to have changed his mind since his earlier opposition to the sewage farm. See ch.4 section 1.

⁴⁹ TNA MH12/9816: Lord Gainsborough to LGB 11 April 1876.

protest that its representations about the early publication of Rawlinson's report appeared to have been ignored. It noted with satisfaction Sclater Booth's spirited recent defence in parliament of the RSA at Eagley (in Bolton, which was dealing with its own epidemic),⁵⁰ and hoped that it could expect similar support. The LGB patiently emphasised its neutrality and called for greater harmony in Uppingham;⁵¹ Sclater Booth, sensing that things were collapsing into recrimination again, decided that this was not the moment to despatch an inspector after all, and wrote to Simon on the 17th: 'I particularly wish that Dr Power should not go down to Uppingham at present'.⁵²

But despite this concession the LGB was not going to allow itself to be dictated to by the RSA, which it believed was side-stepping the main issue.⁵³ It suspected that ratepayer opinion would, sooner or later, start to shift against the RSA. It had also received demands for action from a Captain Withington of Liverpool on behalf of the school parents.⁵⁴ Withington's intervention served to highlight not only parental concern that the school should be allowed to return to its roots as quickly as possible, but also a strengthening in parental support of Thring after all the criticism of the previous autumn – especially in Uppingham's recruiting heartlands in north-west England. Now that the great Borth experiment had been brought to fruition with virtually all the boys safely installed there, the venture was acquiring the status of an imaginative, even heroic, act in the face of small-minded bureaucrats.

⁵⁰ See ch.6 section 2.

⁵¹ TNA MH12 9816: RSA to LGB 14 April 1876.

⁵² Ibid: LGB papers 17 April 1876.

⁵³ Ibid: LGB to RSA 25 April 1876.

⁵⁴ Ibid: Withington to Charity Commissioners 24 April 1876.

Withington was about to launch a *Borth fighting fund* to help Thring with the worrying costs of the school's new location. He demanded to know how he could legally force the LGB to intervene. Faced with this unexpected development, the LGB decided that it would now try harder to get things moving. In a strong reply to the RSA's protests,⁵⁵ it declared that, whatever the rights and wrongs of the past, it was now the duty of the RSA to get improvements moving. It was dissatisfied with the fact that plans and estimates had not yet been received, and said it it was receiving complaints about the RSA which it hoped it would not be necessary to investigate.

Unabashed, the RSA retorted that it would 'not venture to express an opinion on the vexatious character of the interference to which they have been subjected throughout the discharge of their duties in very difficult and unexpected circumstances', and that they would welcome a full enquiry into their dispute with Thring. It did, however, send a report from Field on the latest situation, and promised to send yet another deputation to the LGB within a few days.⁵⁶

Meanwhile Sclater Booth added to the pressure on the guardians by his reply to a parliamentary question (May 4th). The *Stamford Mercury* quoted Hansard at length:

In reply to the Rt Hon Gerard Noel,⁵⁷ Mr Sclater Booth said: 'My attention has been called to the unfortunate circumstances which have led to the withdrawal of a well-known school to the coast, and during last winter, at the

⁵⁵ Ibid: LGB to RSA 25 April 1876.

⁵⁶ Ibid: RSA to LGB 3 May 1816.

⁵⁷ MP for Rutland; he was also a school trustee: see ch. 2 section 2.

urgent request of the school authorities I rendered such assistance as I could in the difficult and painful position to which they were placed, without however presuming to express an opinion on the points of controversy between themselves and the sown authorities. I have now every reason to believe that the sanitary authority is ready and willing to undertake such works of sewerage and water supply as are required to put their district into a satisfactory state, and that they have taken the necessary steps with that object' (Hear hear).⁵⁸

It would be hard for Barnard Smith and Wales to ignore such expectation. With Uppingham's affairs once more the focus of its attention, the LGB also belatedly (May 13th) approved Haviland's reappointment as MOH – a decision which the RSA had been asking for since early February.⁵⁹ Bell thought it deplorable, but inevitable; he realised that Uppingham had only one vote in the affairs of the fourteen places in the Northampton combined district which employed the MOH.⁶⁰

Thereafter, a long correspondence began again between the LGB and the RSA over further side-issues: the bye-laws question, the cost of printing the reports of Haviland and Field, how the RSA should pay for it and how the sums should be entered in the accounts. The RSA assured the LGB that in the matter of sewerage improvements they were keen to accelerate the usual tender procedure, and to use 'a local contractor of standing'.⁶¹ The LGB finally received Field's plans and estimates on June 3rd, and

⁵⁸ *Mercury* 12 May 1876.

⁵⁹ TNA MH12/9816: RSA resolution 9 February 1876. It must, however, also be borne in mind that Uppingham was only one small part of the consortium of districts which employed him, and that it provided only a small proportion of his income.

⁶⁰ Bell: *Letterbook*: Bell to Thring 20 July 1876.

⁶¹ TNA MH12/9816: RSA to LGB 26 May 1876.

authorized in principle the loan to pay for them, but it decided on June 7th that a local enquiry should be held before it was confirmed. Notices advising ratepayers of the loan should be posted in the usual way.⁶² The enquiry would examine not only the state of the sanitation but also the case for a PWLB loan for improvement work.

Major Tulloch, the inspector, eventually arrived to carry out his enquiry on July 7th. Even allowing for the gloss which Bell put on it in a subsequent letter to Thring, this seems to have been a very difficult visit for Barnard Smith and his colleagues, and tempers quickly became frayed. Tulloch first took exception to the fact that the RSA had provided him with some, but not all, of the previous winter's reports on the crisis. It had sent him Haviland's report, together with its own views and the report commissioned from Rogers Field, but had omitted both the more critical LGB report from Rawlinson, and the school-commissioned report from Tarbotton. Nor did Tulloch respond sympathetically to Brown's procedural objections about the advertising process.

When he went out to see the evidence, it was a hot July day. 'The drains luckily stank on that day their best', according to Bell; 'Major Tulloch said the state of the place was a scandal and that the works must be done. His duties took him to many queer places, but he had never been in one so openly foul'.⁶³ Thring wrote in his diary that 'Sundry of the townspeople (it was but small) spoke pleasantly of the school, and money statistics were advanced without contradiction to show how much the town gained by the school'.⁶⁴

⁶² TNA MH12/9816: LGB to RSA 7 June 1876.

⁶³ Parkin, GR, (ed): *Edward Thring, Headmaster of Uppingham School: Life, Diary and Letters* (1898) Vol. 2 p. 59: Thring to Birley (following a letter from Bell) 7 July 1876.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*: Thring to Birley 7 July 1876. Presumably this was based on information sent to him at Borth.

Not long afterwards, Bell was expressing concern that the RSA would delay things still more, resentful of the fact that the LGB was insisting on open competition for the tenders, even including firms beyond the immediate locality.⁶⁵ The RSA also objected to a proposed bonus for the successful tenderer if he completed the work during a specified period. Once it was known that the school would not be returning in September, the RSA slowed the process right down (apparently in a fit of pique at Major Tulloch's caustic remarks), deciding to re-advertise and then finding that the form of advert was declared invalid on a legal technicality.⁶⁶ On this issue, Bell's suspicions appear to have been well-justified.

5) THRING'S SITUATION: JUNE/JULY 1876

Barnard Smith and his colleagues had judged Thring's situation with some accuracy. Once the initial exhilaration (of setting things up at Borth and seeing the boys arrive) had worn off, Thring's moods became more variable again, and as the long days of June sped by, his diaries show that euphoria was again punctuated by black depressions. In his brighter moments, he was glad to have escaped from the RSA – at least for a time. He explained in a letter to his brother, Godfrey: "I have not had, as at Uppingham for so many years, to sit like Job, scraping boils on a dunghill."⁶⁷ But he could not ignore the pressures mounting on him as a result of the slowness of events in Uppingham and London. A decision would soon have to be made about where the school would be located for the autumn term.

⁶⁵ Bell: *Letterbook*: Bell to Thring 6 July 1876.

⁶⁶ Ibid: Bell to Skrine (n/d).

⁶⁷ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 60: Bell to Revd. Godfrey Thring 11 July 1876.

Thring's debts were increasing, despite Withington's fighting fund. Circulars had been sent to every parent, and the fund was publicised nationally in *The Times* on April 21st (following a letter to the Editor from *A parent*) and locally in the *Aberystwyth Observer* a fortnight later.⁶⁸ The *Stamford Mercury* reported that £200 was raised in the first week.⁶⁹ But it was not enough, and financial worry was never far from Thring's mind; he confided to his diary on May 26th: 'My bank books came this morning – a heavy weight there. I don't quite see how my expenses should be less...' ⁷⁰ He raged at his own powerlessness at having had to leave Rutland:

It has suited the people, who act for Uppingham, to represent us as hostile, but it would be difficult for them to show that we have done anything hostile. As is generally the case when a great wrong is done by people in power, they are lavish of their accusations. My one answer is: 'Why are we at Borth if we are powerful or pugnacious? People are not turned out of house and home and brought face to face with ruin for their own amusement' ⁷¹

He also knew that he had to do what he could to work with the trustees (with whom there had been minimal contact since March), even though he had clashed with them so much over the years, and had developed a profoundly pessimistic view of the level of understanding that they had for the school and its achievements. This gloom was compounded by the extraordinary fact that not one trustee appears to have visited Borth during this summer term (apart from Birley and Jacob who had been down to

⁶⁸ *Aberystwyth Observer* 6 May 1876.

⁶⁹ *Mercury* 28 April 1876.

⁷⁰ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 64. Parkin also records (same page) that individual contributions continued to come in; on 29 November, Thring's diary shows his gratitude for the gift of another £100 from Skrine 'as a birthday present for the school's expenses'.

⁷¹ UA: Thring to an un-named relative (n/d).

see their sons). Nor would they come throughout the school's entire stay at Borth.

Any knowledge of its situation throughout the year was acquired only at second-hand.

Yet they were still his employers, and Thring grew increasingly anxious as news arrived that they were to hold a special meeting on June 17th. He wrote to Birley:

Bear in mind that a fiat of the trustees on Saturday for return, without an affirmation of safety, means the break-up of the present school. If they order, without giving assurance of safety in their judgement, the order will not be obeyed. And I think I may add a large number of masters will stand by me in this refusal... It is strange sitting here and waiting quietly for one's doom, and at such hands.⁷²

All through June he had been testing the mood of the masters about the possibility of the school spending a second term away. His diary entry on June 22nd shows that the idea of remaining in Wales had initially met a great deal of opposition:

The conduct of the masters up to a fortnight ago, [even] in fact up to the meeting [i.e. of the trustees on June 17th] had almost been such as to make me tell Birley and Jacob that to hold to [i.e. stay on in] Borth with such disaffection was impossible...⁷³

He was haunted by the idea that he might be forced into a humiliating return to Uppingham, with proper drainage and water supply still unprovided. In such an event,

⁷² UA: Thring to Birley 15 June 1876.

⁷³ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 57: Thring's diary 22 June 1876.

they would have lost ‘as I told them weeks ago, almost all the advantage that we had gained by our daring move and its trials, and that all that could be done now was to avoid unconditional surrender’. This was unthinkable as far as Thring was concerned. He decided that ‘Things tend more and more to a final breaking away from Uppingham’.⁷⁴ Undaunted by the sceptics, he talked of re-founding the school elsewhere. He was not entirely alone in this; at least one housemaster (Bagshawe) was voicing the same thoughts.⁷⁵

6) THE TRUSTEES: DECISION AND U-TURN

It is impossible to say whether news of any of these doubts and disputes got back to Barnard Smith and Wales, and if so, whether they passed them on to the trustees. But the trustees appear to have been aware of them; at the meeting on June 17th they confirmed Thring’s worst suspicions about them by declining to take medical advice about the latest state of the town before ordering him to bring the school back to Uppingham in September.⁷⁶

If only the masters had presented a united front for staying in Borth *ahead* of the meeting, he might have been able to persuade the trustees at least to defer a decision. But they had not been united, and now if the school did not return as instructed, Thring would be in direct confrontation with his employers. He feared they would have the pretext to dismiss him, and wrote in his diary:

All along I had said it was running our heads into a rat-trap; ...but I also told [Skrine] that I knew he thought me headstrong and impulsive, but that the bold

⁷⁴ Ibid p. 58: Thring’s diary 1 July 1876.

⁷⁵ Ibid p. 59: Thring’s diary 26 June 1876.

⁷⁶ Ibid pp. 59-60: Letter from Thring to Revd Godfrey Thring 11 July 1876.

dashes of resistance, when I made them, were the most solemn and deliberate acts of my life; that these subjects were on my mind night and day; and that I never did anything dangerous without having very carefully counted the cost, made up my mind to possible defeat, and the more dangerous the more deliberate, at all events, my action was...⁷⁷

In the event, the trustees' stance spectacularly back-fired, because faced with such high-handedness from such a group of men so remote from their situation, the housemasters' mood suddenly started to change. Belatedly they rallied behind Thring. Even those who had been demanding that everyone return to Uppingham as soon as the school broke up for the summer, now began to tell him that they thought at least one more term away was inevitable. The diary records that *S* (probably Skrine) 'is now convinced that we ought to stay here next term, and shall probably have to do so'.⁷⁸ Thring added: 'I said this should have been the masters' opinion six weeks ago, when it would have made all things easy; that now it was impossible to move [i.e. to change plan and extend the stay]...'

By July 1st nearly all masters' were convinced, not least because Dr Bell had written to Thring with news of fresh typhoid cases in the town.⁷⁹

As I knew you had to give a decided answer to your landlord [at the Hotel] at the end of this month, I thought it best to drop a line as to my suspicions that you might avoid giving such answer as you might wish afterwards to withdraw ... I fear it must decide you to stop away for the next term, I cannot see how

⁷⁷ Ibid p. 57: Thring's diary 22 June 1876.

⁷⁸ Ibid p. 57: Thring's diary 22 June 1876.

⁷⁹ Bell: *Letterbook* 26 June 1876. They were in a house on the Leicester Road.

you can come back in the face of it.⁸⁰

As a result, direct confrontation with the trustees was unnecessary. Their demand for the school to return in September, closely followed by these new typhoid cases, was quickly overtaken by Tulloch's devastating report, together with a strong subsequent message backed by the LGB stating that on no account should the school return before Christmas. When the trustees met on July 14th they had no alternative but to reverse their earlier decision.⁸¹

A telegram to this effect arrived in Borth at 5pm. It was expressed in face-saving terms: the minute book records:

In the opinion of the trustees there is nothing in the present condition of the town of Uppingham to cause them to rescind their resolution of the 17th ult., yet having regard to a memorial addressed to them by the whole body of the assistant masters they are willing in compliance with the same that the school should remain in Borth during the autumn term.⁸²

Thring drew wry amusement from it: 'It is fun to see what a sour face they make over it, and are foolish enough to show that they make'.⁸³ At least they granted a further £500 (in advance of the following term's fees) to keep the masters financially afloat.

⁸⁰ Ibid: Bell to Thring 28 June 1876.

⁸¹ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 59: Thring to Birley 7 July 1876.

⁸² Trustees' Minute Book 14 July 1876.

⁸³ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 pp. 60-61: Thring's diary 14 July 1876.

7) END OF TERM AT BORTH

A few days later term ended on ‘a glorious day, bright and hot’. The boys departed by train – but not before Thring had told them ‘to come back with the soldier spirit to face whatever remained’. ‘So the fight is over and the first battle won’, he wrote that night: ‘The long day’s struggle ended and happy dreams at last come down on Uppingham by the Sea. Altogether my heart is so full of gratitude....’⁸⁴

But he was a realist as well as an idealist, and he surely knew that a second or even third term would have none of the novelty of the first. Summer, with warm weather and so many possibilities out of doors, had been a pleasurable experience; a winter term – with short days and variable, cold weather, would pose far greater problems.

Birley had written to Dr Bell while on a visit to Borth on June 7th: ‘the place is glorious now, but *I do not think it tenable in winter in its present condition* – you need not tell the rector.’⁸⁵

Meanwhile, there was one unexpected result of the school’s presence in Borth. If typhoid could be catching, so could enthusiasm for public health reform. The people of Borth had begun to focus their attention on Borth’s own lack of a public water supply. While the school was away over the summer, a public meeting took place. There was much talk of smells and dangers (and much raking over of old complaints about how the Cambrian Railway Company had worsened the situation by altering the course of local streams near the village when building its embankments a decade

⁸⁴ Ibid p. 61: Thring’s diary 20 July 1876.

⁸⁵ UA: Letter from Bell to Birley 7 June 1876.

earlier). If the RSA could not, or would not, provide it, other means must be found to finance a waterworks.⁸⁶

Similar meetings were held in Aberystwyth itself a month later.⁸⁷ The *Cambrian News* mused on the fact that ‘How watering places can expect to flourish as long as visitors are unable to obtain even scanty supplies of doubtful water is a mystery’.⁸⁸

Thring, on holiday in the Lake District, was not there to witness such protests, but it is likely when he heard about them that he recognised their familiar ring – and that the irony was not lost on him. He would no longer be in Borth when they eventually yielded results.

8) HIGH SUMMER 1876

With the summer term at Borth now ended, the masters went their separate ways for the summer break. Thring, in need of rest, departed to his usual retreat, Ben Place at Grasmere in the Lake District.⁸⁹ It was left to Dr Bell and to Christian (the only one of the housemasters who appears to have spent much of the summer in Uppingham, and who seems to have been deputed to handle some matters on Thring’s behalf) to keep things moving as best they could – with Birley and Jacob guiding the effort and giving legal advice where it was needed.⁹⁰

Bell continued to relieve his frustration through literary activity - partly by reviving his long dispute with Haviland. When he reported to the RSA on July 1st that typhoid

⁸⁶ *Aberystwyth Observer* 19 August 1876. It took place at the home of a Captain Delahoy.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*: 23 August 1876.

⁸⁸ *Cambrian News* 28 July 1876.

⁸⁹ It is interesting that Hodgkinson, having remained in Uppingham for the summer term, now visited Aberystwyth – possibly he was curious to see Borth for himself.

⁹⁰ UA: drawn from letters and letterheads dated July and August 1876.

had broken out again,⁹¹ it immediately informed the LGB. Haviland was sent to investigate, and claimed:

I proceeded to the premises where I met Mr Bell and requested him to accompany me... He however refused to do so and dared me to enter the premises... Having been thus impeded in the execution of my duty, I left... and report the fact, asking how I am to act under the circumstances.⁹²

Bell immediately wrote to the LGB himself, seeking a ruling that Haviland (as the MOH rather than a local GP) had no power to enter a private house in such circumstances without the agreement of its occupier.⁹³ The RSA, in a difficult position now that Bell was one of its members, also decided to ask the LGB for a ruling on the issue. It replied, confirming that Haviland had no such power.⁹⁴ Three days later, Bell returned to the attack, pointing out to the LGB that (under the 1875 Public Health Act) MOHs were required to look into causes of disease outbreaks *as a whole*, but not into individual cases. He claimed furthermore that he had kept Haviland fully informed about this case; despite the fact that Haviland had given no apology for earlier incidents between them. A characteristically cautious LGB memo in reply suggested that it could, or should, not interfere; this was deemed to be a matter of professional etiquette, not of law, and Bell had no grounds for complaint *in law*.⁹⁵

⁹¹ Bell: *Letterbook* 6 July 1876.

⁹² TNA MH12/9816: Haviland to LGB 1 July 1876. Haviland referred to him as 'Mr' Bell – for reasons best known to himself.

⁹³ Ibid: Bell to LGB 1 July 1876.

⁹⁴ Ibid: RSA to LGB 1 July 1876. The house was owned by a Mr Peach, who had backed Bell in the dispute.

⁹⁵ Ibid: Bell to LGB 4 July 1876.

Bell again wrote, thanking the LGB for its support, and justifying himself again at length. It was insulting for Haviland to talk about ‘a *supposed* case of typhoid fever’. This infuriated the LGB, which recorded an indignant memo against Bell’s insensitivity in pursuing the issue so remorselessly despite being a guardian himself. It considered whether ‘to advise Mr Bell of his social responsibilities’, but decided eventually that ‘the safe course is merely to acknowledge it’.⁹⁶ Unabashed, Bell then researched further, and wrote to Jacob that he had discovered that Haviland had failed to send in annual reports and illness and mortality returns for either 1874 or 1875: ‘If the LGB stand their official leaving their letters unanswered, they will stand anything’.⁹⁷

Bell now broadened the issue again, questioning the RSA’s every decision. What were its motives in allowing further delay? Was there not a risk that with the project so delayed and so contentious, only small contractors would tender for the contract, and that the work might be inadequately done? Why was it so resentful of the fact that the LGB was insisting on open competition?⁹⁸ Why was it opposed to a bonus being paid to any contractor completing the work during a specified period? He wrote to Thring: surely it was unreasonable for Haviland to continue to object to the proposed flushing arrangements of the sewer system all through July and August, ostensibly on the grounds that the water company was not yet in a position to guarantee enough water to make them work?⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Ibid: LGB internal memo 19 July 1876. The reference to ‘Mr’ Bell is probably transcribed from Haviland’s protest: see footnote 92.

⁹⁷ Bell: *Letterbook*: Bell to Jacob 2 August 1876.

⁹⁸ UA: RSA minute 13 July 1876.

⁹⁹ Bell: *Letterbook*: Bell to Thring 26 July 1876.

The RSA meanwhile became involved in a new dispute with the LGB over the terms of the proposed loan to pay for the new sewers. It seems likely that Treasury demands for interest rates higher than 3.5% to be the norm were now being felt by the LGB's officials.¹⁰⁰ Major Tulloch's initial recommendation after the Board's enquiry in Uppingham in early July was in line with the new Treasury policy,¹⁰¹ but the RSA pleaded that its situation merited being judged a special case, and that its rate should be set at only 3.5%. The LGB agreed to recommend this, but it warned the RSA that it had no power to overrule the PWLB, which might veto this recommendation.¹⁰² It also insisted on putting forward the proposal to the PWLB that the loan be repaid over the newly-required loan period of only 30 years, rather than the 50 years which the RSA wished for.¹⁰³ The ratepayers would have to foot the increased bill.

As the day for the opening of the tenders drew near, Bell became increasingly anxious. He wrote again to the LGB: the weeks were slipping by, the summer would soon end and the weather would deteriorate and construction work would become more difficult and expensive.¹⁰⁴ He wished that the LGB would again send down someone from London to force the pace. He believed that the LGB lacked the will, rather than the legal power to interfere; he felt that the RSA had watched the recent successful resistance elsewhere of the Keighley guardians to LGB pressure in a vaccination dispute, and were taking their cue from them.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰ See ch. 2 section 7.

¹⁰¹ UA: Note on the LGB enquiry 5 July 1876.

¹⁰² TNA MH12/9816: Rawlinson to LGB 10 July 1876.

¹⁰³ Ibid: LGB to RSA 10 July 1876: also 17 and 21 July 1876.

¹⁰⁴ Bell: *Letterbook*: Bell to Skrine 2 August 1876.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid: Bell to Jacob 7 August 1876.

He also suggested that Jacob visit the PWLB Office in an effort to accelerate a decision about the loan. He hoped that Rogers Field would be present when the tenders were opened to contribute his engineering expertise, although he was sure that Barnard Smith would prefer him not to be. Bell particularly feared that if the water company could not guarantee sufficient supplies immediately to flush the new sewers, Barnard Smith would use this as a pretext to delay sewerage works until the waterworks was complete, possibly by up to a year: 'I said to him, you cannot put off the works until that time. Oh yes, he said, we can, if Mr Field and Mr Haviland tell us they ought not to be done. Barnard Smith does not want to open the tender in that case',¹⁰⁶

Bell had become convinced that the RSA was deliberately doing the least it could get away with, and that it was determined 'to make Mr Thring submit to them'.¹⁰⁷ He confided similar fears in a letter to Sir Henry Thring, wondering whether the ratepayers ought to be goaded into action against the RSA – or even whether the LGB should seek special parliamentary powers to over-ride it. It needed to act with 'energy and firmness'. He reiterated his regret at Haviland's recent reappointment as MOH, and wondered if it boded ill for the future.¹⁰⁸

Thring shared Bell's pessimism from afar. He wrote to Christian from Grasmere on Aug 9th:

How I hate the whole subject... The rector has written a specious letter to Mr Jacob which is most instructive. He lets out that since Sir C Adderley and

¹⁰⁶ Ibid: Bell to Thring 7 August 1876.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid: Bell to Jacob 9 August 1876.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid: Bell to Sir Henry Thring 10 August 1876.

myself have failed to bring them to book with the LGB, no other power can.

This is the secret of their insolent security. He is instructively [sic]¹⁰⁹ blind to the fact that there may be other reasons behind a want of power for not pursuing a matter to the bitter end, and other penalties besides the law.¹¹⁰

He hoped Adderley would fight on, but felt that it was not for him and the masters to fight the RSA ‘over the (interest) rate’. If the town was not prepared to admit its errors, there was little he could do:

I am sure if the chancellor [rector] could be made to feel that the school would be broken up by the measures, and not simply that I should be hunted down, he would think twice over them.

As an aside, he implied that he believed that the LGB was threatening not to confirm Haviland’s reappointment, although he did not expect the threat to be carried out.¹¹¹

On August 13th Bell wrote to Jacob that the RSA was now putting out false information about the increased rates which would result from the sanitary works, partly to cover its tracks for the costs of its opposition to improvements earlier.¹¹²

Every delay, every problem he saw as a conspiracy rather than the product of accident or incompetence – even the slowness of a final decision from London over the loan: ‘I

¹⁰⁹ He may have meant ‘instinctively’.

¹¹⁰ UA: Thring to Christian: 9 August 1876.

¹¹¹ UA: Thring to Christian 9 August 1876.

¹¹² Bell: *Letterbook*: Bell to Jacob 13 August 1876.

do not think that the LGB Inspector (Mr Beaumont) was here accidentally, and I think that Barnard Smith knows more about that than he cares to tell'.¹¹³

9) INTERVENTIONS FROM ELSEWHERE

Bell had kept up the pressure almost single-handed at a critical time, but August saw a period of sustained pressure on the school's behalf by others, too. William Earle, the longest-standing member of the staff by some years¹¹⁴, wrote three letters on August 14th. First, as 'the Second Master in Uppingham School' he asked the LGB to compel the RSA to complete the sewerage work by November. He claimed to be writing at the behest of leading ratepayers in the town (given his very longstanding links with it), as well as on behalf of the school. Again the LGB stood back, referring the request to the RSA which responded through its clerk on August 28th that the new bye-laws had been fully published, and were now agreed and adopted.¹¹⁵ Progress on Earle's concerns could now be expected very soon; it would also shortly be accepting a tender for the sewerage work, subject to the references being satisfactory. The LGB replied, emphasising that there must be as little delay as possible.¹¹⁶

Earle also wrote to Wales. Their friendship went back nearly two decades, and he hoped it would survive these controversies:

I can hardly tell you how distressed I am that the Board are again going to

¹¹³ Ibid: Bell to Jacob 3 August 1876.

¹¹⁴ He had been appointed well before Thring's arrival in 1853.

¹¹⁵ TNA MH12/9816: LGB to RSA 28 August 1876.

¹¹⁶ Ibid: LGB to RSA 28 August 1876. See Matthews, Bryan: *By God's Grace* (Maidstone, 1984) pp. 68-70, p. 83 and p. 85 for a description of Earle; he appears to have been a good foil to Thring insofar as he was loyal, cautious and steady.

postpone the drainage; I simply cannot believe that they will do such a thing. I hope that you will not only not sanction [the improvements], but that you will let your disapproval [of procrastination] be publicly known. It will endanger the peace of Uppingham in our time. I beg and entreat you as one who has been and who still desires to be your friend, desiring as I do the return of mutual goodwill, rendered more uncertain than ever, to do all you can...

It was a dignified and moving plea, from a cautious and moderate man. No reply has survived.¹¹⁷

Finally Earle wrote to Lord Gainsborough, Sir Charles Adderley and Sir John Fludyer, as powerful local influences and trustees. He sent copies of the letters to Christian. 'No time should be lost'. He suggested that a large number of ratepayers should be assembled to go up to London; he would gladly come himself or 'meet the expenses of others to go'. Christian (by then on holiday in Ilminster) replied that the news of further delays was indeed 'disgusting and really alarming... I am more and more of the opinion that the time has come for a more distinctly aggressive policy on our part'. He approved of the idea of a petition to London and a deputation if necessary. Meanwhile there should be a ratepayers' meeting. He seemed to recall that all the magistrates could sit on the RSA ex officio and suggested that they too should be contacted to apply their influence.

Christian had himself been active, in three ways. On August 11th he too had written to Sir Charles Adderley, encouraging him to put down more parliamentary questions.

¹¹⁷ UA: Earle to Wales, Christian and Gainsborough: all 14 August 1876 UA.

Adderley replied: ‘It is inconceivable that *men* [sic] should act thus.’¹¹⁸ He also sent Christian a telegram: ‘Find names of any members of parliament having sons at Uppingham who would ask question in the House of Commons’.¹¹⁹ Christian appears to have acted on this advice, for three days later, in response to a question in parliament from Mr Whitwell, a back-bench MP, Sclater Booth denied that the postponement of the school’s return was due to the non-completion of drainage works.¹²⁰ On what basis he made this statement is far from clear. He surely cannot have believed this, but he may have seen it as counter-productive for the RSA to be publicly put under any further pressure.

Christian also wrote to Charles Clode, the legal under-secretary of the PWLB, on August 16th requesting a speedy decision on the loan question – and pleading the case for an interest rate of only 3.5%.¹²¹ Clode replied a day later that he thought there would be no problem. Thirdly Christian received letters from both Birley and Jacob saying that the LGB should be contacted immediately if the next meeting produced further delays, together with an expression of support from Hodgkinson¹²² and a letter from Thring himself with the P.S.: ‘I am so sorry you have all this worry’.¹²³

By now, with no obvious end in sight, Thring held the view that the school had done all it could, and that it was up to the ratepayers to assert themselves – which he believed they would. ‘The utter want of business acuteness makes one laugh... clever

¹¹⁸ UA: telegram and letter 11 August 1876.

¹¹⁹ UA: telegram: 11 August 1876.

¹²⁰ *Mercury* 18 August 1876, confirmed in Hansard.

¹²¹ UA: Christian to Clode 16 August 1876. Clode held this post 1876-80, and was created CB 1880. Bell confirmed this in a letter to Jacob 18 August 1876.

¹²² UA: Hodgkinson to Christian 16 August 1876 (written from Marine Terrace, Aberystwyth).

¹²³ UA: Thring to Christian 17 August 1876 (written from Grasmere).

men would not bungle so much in conducting their own case'.¹²⁴ He broke his holiday and went down meet Birley (and Jacob) in Manchester; afterwards he wrote back to Christian: 'I quite agree that the crisis seems to have come, but I cannot think that the school in my person should be dragged through the mire of a street fight with the rector...' ¹²⁵ Birley observed:

I am sure that if the inhabitants of Uppingham care for the school to be amongst themselves they must assert themselves as they have never done yet – I find parents of boys here very little inclined to lend any help – they argue that if Uppingham does not care for the school they need not have it – and that it would be much better if Mr Thring would leave the place and set up his flag elsewhere.¹²⁶

He also suggested in a letter to Christian that the time might have come for the LGB to undertake the sanitary works itself.¹²⁷ His view that the time had come for maximum pressure to be exerted on the RSA was backed up by Mullins, also on holiday in Somerset, in a letter to Christian (August 14th):

The intelligence you give is disgusting and really alarming. I think you have done very well in getting so decided a resolution passed, and I shall be glad if you will add my name to it... I do not think any time should be lost in having the petition to the LGB prepared.... I am more and more of the opinion that the time has come for a more distinctly aggressive policy on our part.

¹²⁴ UA: Thring to JC Guy 27 July 1876.

¹²⁵ UA: Thring to Christian 14 August 1876.

¹²⁶ UA: Birley to Christian 15 August 1876.

¹²⁷ UA: Birley to (probably) Thring 16 August 1876. The letter is addressed to 'My Dear Sir'

Everyone I meet or hear from speaks in the same terms. It would be a great thing to get someone of independent position to attend the sanitary meeting on Wednesday. I believe all magistrates residing in the town are ex-officio members.

He suggested enlisting the support of two other local clergymen: Revd John Piercy of Slawston or Revd Harry Upcher at Allexton.¹²⁸ He thought that Bell knew Piercy:

The men who are afraid of the LGB might rally to a leader who was not afraid of B[arnard] S[mith] or the r[ector]... I will willingly find £5 (or if necessary £10) towards the expense of retaining good legal advice at this crisis. I think at any rate that Haviland's power to interfere should be questioned.¹²⁹

10) THE RATEPAYERS' REVOLT AGAIN

The 'crisis' to which Thring had referred was a renewed demand by local residents – at last – that Barnard Smith meet a ratepayers' deputation. The local tradesmen, having served partial notice of their frustration in four months earlier,¹³⁰ were now asserting themselves in earnest. A deputation of ratepayers had been assembled, representing no fewer than 75 others.¹³¹ The memorial they had drawn up pulled no punches:

We the undersigned ratepayers believe... that our interests will be seriously damaged by any further delay in improving the sewerage: that any addition to

¹²⁸ Kelly's *Directory* 1876. Upcher was not a guardian; Piercy was, but went to only one meeting between 1875 and 1877.

¹²⁹ UA: Thring to Christian 14 August 1876.

¹³⁰ See ch. 6 section 4.

¹³¹ Bell: *Letterbook*: Bell to Jacob 16 August 1876.

the long delay that has already elapsed must add heavily to the pecuniary loss, inconvenience, and suffering which many of them have already undergone, and will imperil the existence of the school upon its present important scale, and prove a deep and lasting injury to the ratepayers and owners of property in the parish.¹³²

The deputation was led by John Hawthorn, who, as a printer and bookshop owner, would have felt the school's continuing absence as keenly as anyone, and who would have had much to lose personally if it left Uppingham permanently. His principal supporters were William Compton and William Garner Hart. Compton's intervention was highly significant; it was he who had led the call for improvements as early as 1857,¹³³ and as churchwarden and a prominent church benefactor, he was one of the few town traders who was not a dissenter – perhaps the only person who could have called Wales to order. That he did so publicly, suggests that his patience was at an end.¹³⁴

Its meeting with Barnard Smith and Wales took place on August 13th, in circumstances which Bell later described in a series of letters to Jacob with some satisfaction: 'The deputation attended at 11am to present the memorial (demand), and it was then arranged to meet them again at 3pm to state what had been done (recently)'. What happened next is not entirely clear, but it seems that when Barnard Smith stated that the RSA was dropping its objections to the water company:

The deputation expressed themselves 'perfectly satisfied' [but] then the rector

¹³² *Mercury* 25 August 1876.

¹³³ See ch. 4 section 1.

¹³⁴ I am indebted to Peter Lane for this point.

[Wales] allowed his temper to get the better of his judgement, and said attacking Mr Hawthorn, 'that they were not to suppose the memorial had made the least difference to their decision, and no memorial could exert any influence'. He was going on in this strain when Compton said: 'Come Mr Wales, don't spoil it, we are all harmonious now', others joined in so the Rector shut up, contenting himself with telling Mr Hawthorn, 'that he hoped now he would use his best influence to bring about a more charitable and peaceful feeling in the parish'. Hawthorn replied 'he should leave that, to someone more influential than himself', the memorial was too fully signed to please the rector and his friends'.¹³⁵

Bell added that there was to be another meeting if necessary a week later; he thought the deputation would decide to contact the LGB immediately after that, if there was no further progress. He also passed on (to Jacob) Christian's fear that the rector and others might make trouble for some of the leading signatories of the deputation – although precisely how is not recorded.¹³⁶ Christian's anxiety was probably unfounded as things turned out; with the RSA in disarray, Field appears to have joined in the back-tracking about the ability of the water company to provide enough water for sewer flushing, which had greatly lessened the impact of the opposition which Haviland had again expressed to the company's new drilling site near the sanatorium.¹³⁷

Three days later the tenders for the sewerage improvements were opened. Seven had been received, ranging between £1,800 and £3,300, the lowest from Mr JH Smart of

¹³⁵ Bell: *Letterbook*: Bell to Jacob 13 August 1876.

¹³⁶ Ibid: Bell to Jacob 14 August 1876.

¹³⁷ Ibid: Bell to Jacob 16 August 1876.

Northampton. Field agreed to examine them, pending a further meeting in a few days' time. 'No men with the slightest particle of integrity can get away from that, still there is a loophole I should like to have stopped...' wrote Bell. He was keen to hear definitively from the PWLB that it would agree to a 3.5% interest rate.¹³⁸ A £3,000 loan was confirmed at 3.5% over 30 years; it would prove to be more than enough to do the work, but its size, even at the lower-than-usual interest rate, would weigh heavily on the ratepayers.¹³⁹

Anticipating that Smart's tender, the lowest, would be successful, Bell also wrote to a Mr Cogan in Northampton to seek assurances about Smart's suitability; it might prevent further delays if he could have a recommendation ready for the next meeting.¹⁴⁰ He reported back to the RSA that all seemed well, and it passed the news on to the LGB, which replied that there should now be a rapid start to the work. Smart's tender for £1,864 was accepted on August 23rd,¹⁴¹ four days after another angry meeting at which ratepayers, again led by John Hawthorn, protested against all the delays - and Wales again lost his temper.

Thring had little sympathy for Barnard Smith, although he saw Wales as the villain of the piece. He wrote to Christian again from Ben Place on the 17th: "The rector is just like a naughty little boy crying 'I don't care, I don't care!' when put in a corner. I am sick of his cant about 'controversy' and 'our not joining them'".¹⁴² A week later,

Thring wrote again:

¹³⁸ Ibid: Bell to Jacob 18 and 19 August 1876.

¹³⁹ See ch.8 section 11 for evidence of the pressure they were under by the time of the school's return. LGB papers show that the mortgage deed was finally signed and sealed by the RSA on October 4th.

¹⁴⁰ Bell: *Letterbook*: Bell to Cogan 16 August 1876.

¹⁴¹ Ibid: Bell to Jacob 23 August 1876.

¹⁴² UA: Thring to Christian 17 August 1876.

We have now entered on the last scene of the curious drama that has been playing this year, and I trust it will be played out well... Nothing surprises me in the rector; he has clearly got out of his depth, and his nose full of water, and may splash about a good deal. I hope the masters at Borth will treat him with cool civility if they see him.¹⁴³

Meanwhile (he wrote) he was gaining ‘rest and strength’ in the Lakes. But despite the obstructiveness of Barnard Smith and Wales, concerns over finance and technical issues, or even over a preoccupation with the impending harvest, some members of the RSA were keen to press forward and to make peace with the school. Christian received a revealing letter from guardian Edward Wortley of Ridlington on August 17th. Wortley professed not to have been fully aware of recent events or the latest stormy meeting – something which seems surprising in view of his long experience as a guardian. He pointed out that some of the delays over the sewerage question had been ‘Partly legal and unavoidable hitherto’, but that he believed ‘now to hold back or defer or not to urge on with all speed would be childish and cruel’. He also wondered whether some recent remarks he had made about a small degree of typhoid being inevitable in Uppingham had been taken as meaning that he was unconcerned; if so, he wished to apologise.¹⁴⁴

It was a welcome gesture – almost the only olive branch between the two sides in the entire five-month period since the school had departed. Things could now surely only get better, but it remained to be seen just how long it would be before it could safely

¹⁴³ UA: Thring to Christian 25 August 1876.

¹⁴⁴ UA: Wortley to Thring 17 August 1876.

return. Earle wrote to Christian on August 19th: ‘All will I trust now go smoothly and oh! For the return of peace and happy days’.¹⁴⁵

11) CONCLUSION

After months of dispute, prevarication and inactivity on the part of the RSA, as autumn approached and the school prepared for its second term at Borth, improvements to the water supply and the sanitation were at last being put in hand.

Dr Bell had worked tirelessly on the school’s behalf in his own, sometimes petulant, way. A combination of pressure on Barnard Smith and the guardians by Bell, the LGB and the ratepayers had at last yielded results; the *shopocracy* of local tradesmen had finally asserted itself. Recognising that the absent housemasters could not this time play the leading role (as they had done at the March meeting with Barnard Smith and Wales),¹⁴⁶ this group had now itself confronted the RSA. The LGB had then followed suit, thus demonstrating (not for the first time) that local decisions drove central ones, and that local trading conditions drove sanitary reform, rather than vice versa. The masters had been won round to the necessity of a second term in Borth. Even the trustees could see that the school could not yet return. It remained to be seen whether the RSA’s fears about the new water supply would prove correct.

Thring had won this latest round, but his financial and other worries remained very real. Moreover the animosity between school and RSA, headmaster and trustees, MOH and school doctor, even RSA and the LGB remained deep. Any attempts to build bridges between the warring factions were still very fragile.

¹⁴⁵ UA: Earle to Christian 19 August 1876.

¹⁴⁶ See ch.6 section 4.

CHAPTER 8 – AUTUMN, WINTER AND SPRING 1876-7

This chapter examines events in Uppingham during the autumn, winter and spring of 1876-7, during the second half of the school's time away and after its return in April. The key decisions about sanitary improvement and water supply had been taken, but the work remained to be successfully completed.

In the early weeks of the new school term it was assumed that the pupils would be back in Rutland soon after Christmas.¹ This expectation resulted from news which arrived in Borth on September 15th (the first day of the new term) that sewerage work in Uppingham had begun at last. It was also reassuring to Thring and his staff that Hodgkinson had experienced no further problems in the Lower School in the months since Tarbotton's improvements had been carried out there.²

As the weeks went by however, typhoid again reappeared in the town,³ the works proceeded disappointingly slowly and the date of the school's return was again put back. While it struggled through a welsh coastal winter, controversy remained undiminished within Uppingham. Only with the arrival of spring and the completion of the sanitation and water improvements could it safely return.

The chapter also examines how effective or otherwise these improvements proved to be in the years that followed.

¹ *USM* October 1876.

² *Ibid* September 1876.

³ UA: Bell, Thomas: *Letterbook* 1876-1904: Bell to Earle 19 September 1876.

1) RENEWED CONTROVERSY IN THE PRESS

The fragile truce after the ratepayers' revolt was soon tested, and the wishes of both Wortley and Earle for more harmonious times were not yet to be realised. The end of August brought renewed controversy in the press. The anonymous *Paterfamilias* returned to the attack with an inflammatory diatribe in *The Times* on August 28th. Reminding readers of all the events and specialist reports of the past year, he stated that the school had 'at once carried out all [Rawlinson's suggestions] with unsparing care'. By contrast, the plans of Rogers Field for the town improvements 'were adopted by the local sanitary board... but no effectual effort has been made to carry them out'. Warning that there was still no guarantee that the school would be able to return even after Christmas 'unless more activity is displayed in remedying the original evil', he called for an end to 'mischievous and harmful delay', criticised the trustees for being supine and described:

...the spectacle of a great school under a man of admitted originality and power... whose masters had spent over £80,000 on buildings over the previous twenty years... driven from their rightful home to an obscure welsh village, at the extremity of the land, leaving, like the old Phocaeans 'their fields and Penates and beautiful Temple' to lie waste and desolate.

Bell wrote to Jacob that this had:

acted like a blister, and some of the Authority were very unhappy about the 'lies' it contained. It was debated whether there should be a reply, but it was thought best to leave it alone, because 'while the school can get fair space

allowed in the *Times* for anything they have to say, the S.A. would have their letter mutilated and pushed into a corner'.⁴

But *An old inhabitant* decided to reply. He wrote to the paper on 1st September, listing the number of deaths in the town in recent months. This, he believed showed that it really was a healthy place,⁵ and that the RSA had done all it could. He pointed out that 'the Uppingham School was founded for the benefit of town and district' – from which he concluded that:

Paterfamilias and other parents with large families, to whom a good and cheap education is of great consequence, take advantage of our charity and send their sons to reap the benefits, and are the first to raise an unjust cry against the town from whose charities they have received and are receiving great benefit. I would ask you to allow me to draw the attention of the public to the fact that a sum of £2,000 was expended four years ago for drainage; that a rate of 2/8d in the pound has been laid to pay for expenses in investigating the causes of the outbreak of fever... and that the rates are close upon 10/- in the pound, which will all be largely increased when the drain is finished, and this falls solely on the owners and occupiers in the parish, and Paterfamilias pays nothing towards the expenses that he so loudly calls for.

He also criticised the school for having failed thus far to provide a water supply 'from want of capital, energy or proper advice'.⁶

⁴ Bell: *Letterbook*: Bell to Jacob 30 August 1876.

⁵ The Registrar General's report confirms this: there were only 7 recorded typhoid deaths in 1876 - similar to other years in the decade, apart from 1875. Deaths overall were in line with earlier years.

⁶ *Mercury* 1 September 1876.

2) CONTINUING PRESSURE FOR BETTER DRAINAGE

After all his campaigning in the summer, the autumn brought only limited respite for Dr Bell. He believed *An old inhabitant* to be a former member of the RSA (possibly one of those voted off it earlier in the year): ‘It is a great pity that they do not stick to the truth. They are like the ostrich, they cannot see their deficiencies and believe everyone else is blind’.⁷ He wrote to the LGB: ‘I have told this authority that I am anxious to assist them in carrying out their duties. But that when they endeavour to exceed them, I shall oppose them’.⁸

The RSA had indeed set a new, higher rate, which Bell still believed could have been avoided, but for all the disputes which it had precipitated in recent months.⁹ He was concerned that it might now aim for still more delays, in an attempt to phase the rising costs of the sanitary work. Haviland’s description of his conduct over the June typhoid cases still rankled; there was another typhoid case in the town on September 19th – but this time he would not risk further trouble by reporting it. He justified himself by launching into another denunciation of Haviland: ‘One asks: What is the use of a medical officer?’¹⁰ He wrote at length to Jacob about the sewer progress - and about Haviland.¹¹

The *Stamford Mercury* reported on September 22nd that Mr Smart had begun work on laying the drains. Even now things did not go according to plan:

⁷ Bell: *Letterbook*: Bell to Jacob 1 September 1876. *Paterfamilias* wrote again to the *Times* on 5 September, reprinted in the *Mercury* three days later.

⁸ PRO/TNA MH12/9816: Bell to LGB 19 September 1876.

⁹ Bell: *Letterbook*: Bell to Jacob 1 September 1876.

¹⁰ *Ibid*: Bell to Earle 19 September 1876.

¹¹ *Ibid*: Bell to Jacob 21 September 1876.

On Monday evening, as Mr Holman of Bisbrooke was returning from Leicester, one of the holes being left unprotected, the horse got in and injured itself severely, breaking the harness. Fortunately the occupants of the cart escaped unhurt. On Tuesday evening, Mr Askew¹² went to look at the place where the horse slipped in, and by some means he got in and sustained serious injury.¹³

Bell kept Thring posted about sewerage progress. In a letter of October 6th he detailed progress in great detail: digging deep was proving harder than expected, and was also likely to lead to the work taking longer than anticipated. He spoke of ‘miscalculation and blunder’ – as well as four more typhoid cases among his own patients and rumours of several others elsewhere in the town.

This was news which Thring must have received with trepidation as the autumn evenings drew in. He recorded in his diary:

We hear that the drain work has brought some fearful revelations, and that the chairman has had to come and see to it, as the workmen refused, near the workhouse, to keep on the whole day. I grieve to say there is more typhoid going on there. I suppose at last their eyes must be getting opened up, but I don’t know... The popular feeling at Uppingham, if not stirred up, must gradually find out that we have been most patient, instead of aggressive.¹⁴

¹² He was the owner of the White Hart at 15 High Street West, and also a farmer.

¹³ *Mercury* 22 September 1876.

¹⁴ Parkin, GR, (ed): *Edward Thring: Life, Diary and letters* (1898) Vol. 2 p. 63: Thring’s diary 1 November 1876.

His foreboding proved well-founded; on November 29th, Smart (the drainage contractor) applied to the RSA for extra time to complete the sewer work. Bell did not think it was Smart's fault: rather that the problem lay in poor projections in the tendering.¹⁵

3) THE NATIONAL SCHOOL

Meanwhile Bell had a new issue to pursue with Barnard Smith and particularly with Wales. He wrote to Christian on November 15th that he had drawn the attention of the RSA to the longstanding drainage problems at the national (town) school – something which Christian had suggested that Bell might investigate. This triggered a rare disagreement between Barnard Smith and Wales:

The chairman [Barnard Smith] and two or three others appeared glad to have had the matter brought before them... they have been at the rector about it before, and he has always asked for time, pleaded that they had no funds, that the Authority ought to help and that the gradients were unsuitable etc etc all to delay...¹⁶ Virtually Mr Wales does as he likes in the management of [the national school's] affairs.¹⁷

Bell did not let the matter go, forcing the school managers (of whom Wales was chairman, and whose number included one or two RSA members) to get estimates for improvements, and demanding wholesale resignations if nothing was done.

¹⁵ Bell: *Letterbook*: Bell to Jacob 29 November 1876.

¹⁶ Ibid: Bell to Christian 15 November 1876.

¹⁷ Ibid: Bell to Thring 2 December 1876.

Following another confrontation at the RSA meeting on December 1st, at which Wales again pleaded a shortage of funds and claimed that the guardians had no power to force action from the school managers on this issue, Bell threatened to form an alternative board to overthrow or even buy out the existing school managers.¹⁸ He wrote to Thring to suggest that the masters should either subscribe to this campaign (a suggestion probably not received over-enthusiastically, given all the other financial pressures on them) or use John Hawthorn's recent resignation as a manager as an opportunity to get a master elected.¹⁹ He suggested that Wales was actually in favour of this, wishing that his old friend Earle be nominated. Earle had replied, putting down conditions (the nature of which are not known) on any such nomination, which Wales was being urged by other managers to reject.²⁰

Bell felt that 'extreme intimacy with the rector' might place Earle in a very difficult position.²¹ Yet he did not wish to take on the role of school manager himself, and he was sure from all his previous dealings with another of Wales's suggestions, WH Brown, that Brown would be far from ideal.²² He suggested that Hodgkinson and Campbell would not wish to do it, but thought that Mullins, Candler or Christian might. In the event, the masters decided to support Earle for the role, and he was duly elected.²³ The issue then rumbled on for some months; it was established that there was a dry-earth closet system in place, and that these closets would now be treated

¹⁸ Ibid: Bell to Christian 2 and 6 December 1876.

¹⁹ Ibid: Bell to Thring 2 December 1876.

²⁰ Ibid: Bell to Christian 1 December 1876.

²¹ Ibid: Bell to Christian 8 December 1876.

²² We cannot be sure whether or not Bell had suspicions about Brown's financial probity at this stage: see appendix 6 section 6.

²³ Ibid: Bell to Thring 2 December 1876, and Bell to Christian 6 December 1876.

daily. Earle undertook to keep an eye on the issue, but some managers felt that dry-earth arrangements would not be a good long-term solution.²⁴

4) CONTROVERSY OVER THE WORKHOUSE

Encouraged by the discovery of new areas in which the RSA had failed to discharge its responsibilities, another housemaster wrote to suggest that Bell ask some questions about the state of drainage at the union workhouse.²⁵ Shrewd as ever (and perhaps still elated by his foresight in thwarting the RSA over the previous spring's elections), Candler had thought of something which everyone else who supported the school's case seemed to have overlooked.

The workhouse, like the sanatorium whose cesspits Haviland had criticised so strongly a year earlier, was very near the new water supply station. Haviland had been vehement in June about the risks of allowing the water company to choose a location near the sanatorium as an alternative to its first-choice site to the south of the town which had proved so disappointing.

Candler reckoned that the company's supply would be roughly the same distance from the workhouse as from the sanatorium, and he was curious to know about the workhouse drainage arrangements. It might be possible seriously to embarrass the RSA if it could be accused of criticising the sanatorium pits, while ignoring - or even keeping secret - the state of pits at the workhouse only a few hundred yards away.

²⁴ Ibid: Bell to Christian 19 February 1877.

²⁵ Ibid: Bell to Candler 1 December 1876.

Bell seized on the issue with alacrity, but his first challenge merely produced evasions. Barnard Smith ‘could not say’ what state the workhouse pits were in, or whether they were all to be connected to the new system. Barnard Smith then played for time, saying he was due to meet the workhouse master a week later, and would pursue the question then.²⁶

Barnard Smith may well have hoped that the recurrence of typhoid cases in the town early in December would divert Bell’s attention away from this potentially difficult issue, at least for a time. If so, he reckoned without a sudden new intervention from Haviland, after some weeks of silence, on December 12th, in a memo to the RSA which it passed on to the LGB on the 22nd.²⁷ Haviland seems to have had no knowledge of the workhouse question, but he was still concerned about the sanatorium and the proximity of its pits to the water company’s new site. The issue of this siting had been festering for a full six months (since Birley’s reference to it at the early summer meeting of the trustees).

Haviland stated that he had just revisited Uppingham, and believed that the issue of the waterworks site was so urgent that he was writing to the LGB ‘while travelling between Uppingham and Oundle’, rather than leaving it all until he got back to Northampton. He complained bitterly about the location near the sanatorium. The old sanatorium cesspits had not been removed from the area, which had been a key place in the troubles of a year earlier. The water company’s new well did not seem to go deep enough and was far too close to the old pits. Haviland went back over all the scarlet fever cases earlier in the decade. The company had “signally failed” to provide

²⁶ Ibid: Bell to Candler 1 December 1876.

²⁷ TNA MH12/9816: Haviland to RSA (n/d, but probably 8 November 1876).

an acceptable source, and he would not answer for the consequences.²⁸ He favoured an alternative site further to the north-west.

It is not clear why Haviland suddenly wished to revive all this controversy again,²⁹ but his intervention served to draw more attention to Candler's question about the workhouse. On December 14th Bell wrote again to Candler. He had kept up his pressure on Barnard Smith to do away with the eight or nine workhouse cesspits—both because of the health hazard they represented to the users of the privies, but also because of their proximity to the nearly-completed water works. By now Barnard Smith was fiercely opposed to spending yet more ratepayers' money on the abolition of the pits and the provision of water closets there, and he was supported by Wales. Bell received very little support from other RSA members, even though he had warned them that it risked being accused of double standards if it did not act speedily to remove the workhouse cesspits.

There was another acrimonious debate within the RSA. Barnard Smith said that it was not possible to spend money on installing water closets in the workhouse. Bell countered that it had a well on the premises, so there should be few problems. Barnard Smith did not see 'why we should go to the expense of filling our cesspits to please the water company'. He did not wish to boost its income further. Legally the RSA could not be forced to act – although when Barnard Smith tried to act unilaterally to close the issue down, Brown had advised him that debate should be allowed on the

²⁸ Ibid: Haviland to RSA 12 December 1876. It was sent to LGB on 22 December 1876.

²⁹ In some ways he personifies the modern phenomenon of a single personality in a community who is determined to dictate local policy-making on a single issue and cannot let it go. Point made in conversation by Dr Elizabeth Hurren.

question.³⁰ Whether prematurely or not, the *Stamford Mercury* expressed pleasure that the pits might be removed as soon as the new water and sewerage improvements were complete.³¹ The *Lancet* printed a letter from *A guardian*, expressing a similar hope.³²

5) THRING: CONTINUING CAUSES FOR WORRY

While arguments continued in Uppingham, the masters in exile had one immediate concern: the need (literally) to batten down the hatches in Borth. The cost of making the school's makeshift accommodation suitable for continuing occupation at least through to Christmas³³ was of great concern to them. It was only partially offset by another payment (£169) from Captain Withington's fighting fund.³⁴ The fund had now contributed nearly £730 – which the *USM* later estimated to amount to about a third of the whole cost of the project (surely an over-optimistic calculation).³⁵

News about the progress of the water company was mixed. Construction work was now gathering pace on its site near the sanatorium. Shares were being taken up. In a letter to JC Guy (whose bank was acting for the company), Thring subscribed £30,³⁶ and Guy issued a general invitation to the masters at Borth to follow suit. Christian was one of those who responded – buying 11 shares at £1 per share.³⁷ But it seems that demand for shares was low amongst townspeople in Uppingham, partly because some people resented a Thring-led enterprise and also because the financial pressures caused by the school's absence were increasingly being felt.

³⁰ Bell: *Letterbook*: Bell to Candler 14 December 1876.

³¹ *Mercury* 22 December 1876.

³² *Lancet* 23 December 1876.

³³ See appendix 5 section 4.

³⁴ *USM* October 1876: Thring's letter of thanks to Withington 19 September 1876.

³⁵ See appendix 6 section 1.

³⁶ UA: Thring to Guy 27 September 1876.

³⁷ UA: Receipt dated 30 September 1876.

Thring wrote to Guy on September 30th:

I do not understand the people of Uppingham. I fear I never shall. How people with property in the town can calmly run the risk of seeing it destroyed in value for want of drainage and water supply, and how people with hearts can be indifferent to the illness and death of their neighbours is beyond me.

However fortunately I am not required to account for this.³⁸

He was also keen that Guy should become a director of the water company, and had already suggested Guy's appointment to this role earlier in the autumn, believing that his dual roles as the bank manager and clerk to the school trustees, made him well-qualified for it. He and the masters would support Guy, because he shared their view that this was a venture for 'a community of which we are all members' rather than an issue of school versus town.³⁹ Thring may also have had in mind that fact that the RSA (through Brown, its clerk) had now begun yet another bout of acrimony in the letters column of the *Times* with Hodding and Beevor (who were still acting for the water company).

Hodding and Beevor had taken exception to some of the remarks in one of the letters to the paper from *An old inhabitant*, which had implied that the company was entirely a school initiative, designed to thwart the RSA's own attempts to provide mains water. They pointed out that a public meeting of townspeople had backed the company, and that a number of townspeople were amongst its leading proponents.

³⁸ UA: Thring to Guy 30 September 1876.

³⁹ UA: Thring to Guy 20 October 1876.

Every effort had been made to conform to the wishes both of potential consumers and of the RSA itself.

Thire letter went on to criticise the RSA's failure to provide a water supply in earlier years, and its insistence earlier in 1876 that no street should be dug up without its consent: 'a stipulation which would practically have rendered the act [i.e. the water bill] a dead letter'. They concluded that the slow progress of the project was due not to a 'want of energy' on the part of the company, but to the RSA's own attempts to stop the bill in parliament – a move which had also incurred high costs. 'Peace had to be purchased from the sanitary authority by payment of £75 in aid of their costs of opposition, this being preferable to the expense of a parliamentary contest'.⁴⁰ Bell seized on all this as a another stick with which to beat Barnard Smith at the next RSA meeting.⁴¹

Meanwhile the prospect of the school being back in Uppingham in January was receding. Smart applied to the RSA at the end of November for an extension of the time in which to complete the sanitary works, and this was granted. Bell believed that in drawing up the tender, the RSA had grossly underestimated the amount of work involved, thus making further delay inevitable.⁴²

But there was worse news to come. Towards the end of the year, there were yet again a few more typhoid cases in the town. Hodgkinson, whose recruitment to the Lower School was now feeling the effects of the school's prolonged absence wrote that it

⁴⁰ *Times* 12 September and 2 October 1876.

⁴¹ Bell: *Letterbook*: Bell to Thring 6 October 1876.

⁴² *Ibid*: Bell to Jacob 29 November 1876. A period of three weeks extra was granted.

was ‘very disastrous to me that the school are not returning’.⁴³ The reaction was even gloomier in Borth. Although Thring had been able to hide the implications from the boys, the masters understood all too well what renewed typhoid would mean. Coming at the end of a long hard term the news from Uppingham lowered morale dramatically. Many of the masters did not want to spend Christmas in Borth, and had dispersed elsewhere as soon as term ended, even before any decision had been made as to the date of the school’s return home.

6) RETURN DELAYED AGAIN

On this issue at least, Dr Bell in Uppingham and Dr Childs in Borth were united. Even though bringing in another national expert to give a view on whether it was safe for the School to return might arouse the ire of the RSA, it must be done. Thring agreed. Professor Acland was Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford and had been a member of the 1870 sanitary commission.⁴⁴ He visited Uppingham on December 18th

Acland’s visit was very thorough; he met both Bell and Childs – as well as Tarbotton, who had advised the school on building improvements a year earlier. Jacob came down from Liverpool, anticipating that he would need to brief the trustees and that Thring would need support. Bagshawe and Rawnsley returned from Borth to put the housemasters’ view, and Acland also called on Hodgkinson and Wales in Uppingham, as well as receiving a visit from Haviland and Childs for a conference in Oxford.⁴⁵ Armed with copies of the reports by Haviland and Rawlinson, he toured both the town and the school. He was convinced that it was not yet safe for the boys

⁴³ UA: Letter to his daughter: (n/d, but probably some time in December 1876).

⁴⁴ Professor Henry Wentworth Dyke Acland 1815-1900: Hon Physician to the Prince of Wales. Regius Professor of Medicine, Oxford University 1857-94; Member of the Medical Council 1854-74. President 1874-87; Member of the Sanitary Commission 1870-72; CB 1883, Kt 1884, Baronet 1890.

⁴⁵ UA: Acland to Thring 20 December 1876.

to return – although he was confident that it would be so when the work was eventually complete.⁴⁶

The trustees met on December 22nd. Faced with Acland's report, they had no alternative but to agree to the school remaining away for a further term.⁴⁷ They also decided that they could come to no final settlement of the year's accounts until Thring sent them more details. They voted a further £300 to pay masters' salaries and £250 to Thring towards his expenses, but also asked him to provide them with a statement 'showing in detail the value of the property belonging to the masters conjointly and separately for which they consider themselves to be entitled to be indemnified under the scheme'. Some thought was at last being given to the longer-term financial implications of the situation for the school and its employees.

On December 20th Thring wrote to Christian (who had returned to Uppingham again to play a major role in arranging Acland's visit). He thanked him for his work, but could not hide his weariness and dejection. The masters still with him were disputing financial matters:

I am glad that you are cheered. I should be if I were not so tired, and so worried. Campbell has wasted my time this last fortnight by refusing to pay his scholarship contribution, for the life of me I cannot see a particle of sense in his letters. He has now paid. Rowe [who had left the School for Tonbridge a year earlier] has opened up on me about the capitation fees. I have referred him on to Tuck [the master who was acting as Bursar]... I shall want a

⁴⁶ UA: Report from Acland 20 December 1876.

⁴⁷ UA: Trustees' Minute Book 22 December 1876.

secretary for the next three months and a lawyer at the end. My letters are such a heap... I write from 10 to 1 daily without stopping, and the inside of my head feels as if I was growing a fleece there. Nevertheless I think, if I could think, that there really is a break in the clouds, and some glimpses of light under them...⁴⁸

Thring stayed in Borth for Christmas. There was little respite for him. Even on Boxing Day he was at work – writing to the parents to announce one more term in Borth, and assuring them that in no way would the efficiency of the school suffer.⁴⁹ His trials were far from over.

7) A BITTER IRONY

The final days of the old year brought a wholly unexpected new development. Edward Wortley had taken the chair at the RSA meeting on December 27th, because Barnard Smith was absent - something almost without precedent.⁵⁰ Barnard Smith's death, from typhoid, occurred at Glaston Rectory two days later.

It is hard to know how whether the burdens of running the RSA over the previous few months had contributed to his death. His attitude to the final dispute in which he was involved – his dogged and obdurate opposition to the abolition of the workhouse cesspits – perhaps suggests at the end a man on the brink of exhaustion, losing his sense of perspective. While protecting the ratepayers from further expense was important (and no doubt loomed large in his mind) it seems surprising that he did not

⁴⁸ UA: Thring to Christian 20 December 1876.

⁴⁹ UA: Letter to parents from the Cambrian Hotel, Borth 26 December 1876.

⁵⁰ ROLLR DE1381/441: Uppingham Union Minute Book 3 January 1877.

grasp the potential effect on public opinion of his opposition to improvements in the RSA's own workhouse.

Even in an age accustomed to sudden death, Barnard Smith's passing caused deep shock. The news reached Borth on New Year's Day. Thring's reaction in his diary was regretful but unyielding:

The sad and fearful news reached us that Barnard Smith has died of typhoid fever – apoplexy the immediate cause. Poor fellow! He has fallen a victim to his own obstinacy and delusions. It brings home to us very close, 'He forgives our trespasses as we forgive.'⁵¹

He wrote to Bell:

Your news is truly awful. I am very, very sorry for him. God is very gracious and hearts are not open for us to read, yet nevertheless it is fearful to be suddenly taken away whilst doing wrong. God help us all.⁵²

The RSA members met again on January 3rd and formally recorded the 'unexpected and deeply lamented death of the Reverend Barnard Smith. They cannot refrain from placing on record their strong and grateful sense of the services he has rendered the board while acting as its chairman this last nine years'. The *Stamford Mercury* described him as noted:

⁵¹ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 64: Thring's diary 6 January 1877.

⁵² UA: Thring to Bell 1 January 1877.

not only for his literary labours, but also as a staunch friend to educational pursuits, and also a most successful tutor in the University of Cambridge... he devoted his talents and experience for the benefit of the ratepayers within the Union. There was not a charity or valuable institution within the neighbourhood of which he was not an active member. His loss will not fully be recognized until time shows the actual value...⁵³

8) MOVING FORWARD – BY DEGREES

With Barnard Smith gone, there was an opportunity for a fresh start. Bell was keen that Wortley (who had written to him in such conciliatory tones only a few weeks earlier) should become permanent chairman of both the RSA and the guardians. In the event Wortley took on the RSA chairmanship, but Wales, perhaps feeling that Barnard Smith's death was due in part to exhaustion, suggested that the combined role was now too onerous, and the Hon.WC Evans-Freke became union chairman.⁵⁴ Bell declared himself content with this.⁵⁵

He was, however, still determined to pursue the question of the workhouse cesspits and immediately demanded to know what legal powers the guardians had, or needed, to make structural alterations and how they might be paid for. This would mean more dealings with the LGB.⁵⁶ In less troubled times the RSA members might well have tried to block a move which implied more work and additional expense, but shocked by Barnard Smith's sudden death, they were having second thoughts about their

⁵³ *Mercury* 5 January 1877. It recorded later (23 March 1877) that Mrs Barnard Smith gave a stained glass window to Glaston Church in her late husband's memory, and returned to live in London with 'a very elegant gilt drawing-room clock and a handsome electro-plated inkstand', presented by the grateful parishioners of Glaston.

⁵⁴ *Mercury* 26 January 1877.

⁵⁵ Bell: *Letterbook*: Bell to Jacob 8 January 1877.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*: Bell to Jacob 8 January 1877.

previous indifference to the workhouse question. They agreed to ask Rogers Field to draw up the necessary designs for a new system. Copies were sent to Haviland and to Dr Walford, who was medical officer to the workhouse.⁵⁷

But even this apparently uncontroversial decision produced a new burst of acrimony—this time in the form of a dispute between Haviland and Dr Walford. Walford, who was supported by Bell on this issue, was very keen on linking the workhouse to the new sewerage system, with water closets to be flushed with water from the water company's pipes. Haviland was adamant that dry-earth arrangements (of which he had long been a supporter) would be a better solution than water closets, given the local gradients and soil conditions. He still claimed that the water pressure might not be adequate for water closets, as the workhouse was on some of the highest ground in the whole town. Wortley, who had used a dry-earth system successfully at his own property for many years, was inclined to agree.⁵⁸ Bell used the controversy as a further opportunity to condemn Haviland for involving himself in this issue only at such a late stage:

It is a most extraordinary circumstance to me that Haviland never found out that there were cesspits at the union... If he knew of them he kept them very dark, and I think his opposition arose from his annoyance at my having brought them to light.⁵⁹

The bemused RSA members had appealed to Rogers Field to give advice.⁶⁰ The LGB was keen to avoid involvement in the question; it had already decided not to involve

⁵⁷ ROLLR DE1381/441: Union Minute Book 24 January 1877.

⁵⁸ Bell: *Letterbook*: Bell to Jacob 10 February 1877.

⁵⁹ Ibid: Bell to Jacob 10 February 1877.

itself in the dispute about the proximity of the sanatorium cesspits to the new water station. It believed that it was far too late to start querying the water company's arrangements at this stage. In an internal memo of 3 January 1877 it recorded: 'There does not appear to be reason for distrusting (Haviland's) conclusion... (but) the report seems to be sent for the {LGB's} information, not in order that the {LGB} should express any opinion on it'.⁶¹ It endorsed Haviland's suggestions about dry-earth arrangements at the workhouse, and the alterations went forward - despite Bell continuing to lobby Evans-Freke.⁶² The RSA confirmed this decision on February 21st.⁶³ The inhabitants of the workhouse would not yet enjoy the same facilities as other inhabitants of the town.

The meeting on the 21st was another robust one, with members divided as to whether to seek to involve the LGB further, and whether or not to respond to another recent attack by Haviland on the water company. In the end it was decided that it was too late to oppose it anyway; they would let the issue drop. On the same day Bell reported that 'the flushing cart has arrived, and the sewers are being swept out with it'.⁶⁴ He had already been in touch with Christian at Borth to report that "the health of the town is good, very little illness indeed', although he had recently seen two child cases of typhoid (which he believed were again caused by polluted wells).⁶⁵ Supplies would soon start to flow. The *Stamford Mercury* had reported on February 9th that preparations were being made for the school to return after Easter. But Bell was still worried that Haviland's hostile preoccupation with the water company was

⁶⁰ UA: Minute of RSA special meeting, 24 January 1877.

⁶¹ TNA MH12/9817: LGB internal memo 3 January 1877.

⁶² Bell: *Letterbook*: Bell to Evans-Freke 19 February 1877.

⁶³ ROLLR DE1381/441: Union Minute Book 21 February 1877.

⁶⁴ Bell: *Letterbook*: Bell to Jacob 21 February 1877.

⁶⁵ UA: Bell to Christian 27 January 1877.

continuing, despite the fact that its share capital had been fully subscribed, construction work was well advanced, and mains pipes had been laid along every street and up to all the houses.⁶⁶

9) LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS - AGAIN

Even though the water and sanitation works were now at an advanced stage, it would be important for the school to have plenty of supporters within the RSA after its return. The annual spring elections to the RSA were not far away. It was unlikely that the masters would have to vote from Borth station platform once more (as they would surely be back in Uppingham after Easter), but Bell felt the need to be prepared, just in case the RSA tried underhand methods again.

He was worried that the rector hoped there would be enough candidates to edge out Bell or another of the school's supporters. On February 20th Bell wrote to Mullins, who appears to have been the spokesman for the masters as a whole, about this question.⁶⁷ Should they try to avoid a contest by only putting up Bell himself, or should they also nominate another ally of the school? Would it matter anyway, once the sewerage works were complete and the water company was in business? He was sure that they were not out of the wood yet:

The animosity is not dead, Haviland has been showing his teeth, and some of the authority will back him the moment the year of grace [for the water company to complete its work] expires, as at present they feel powerless to do any serious damage to it.

⁶⁶ *Mercury* 23 March 1877.

⁶⁷ Bell: *Letterbook*: Bell to Mullins 20 February 1877.

Pateman (the school's second choice candidate, alongside Bell)⁶⁸ initially intended to decline to stand again, but changed his mind in anger when he heard about Haviland's continuing opposition to the company.⁶⁹ In the event, he and Bell were elected.⁷⁰

On the eve of the elections Bell even tried to persuade Thring himself to stand against the rector (following a further dispute about which we have no details). For Thring - who had recently written to a friend that only Professor Acland's visit had prevented the 'Rutland clique' from forcing him to bring the school back to Uppingham at Christmas or to resign instead⁷¹ - the prospect must indeed have been tempting. However, in the final days of exile, this would have been one battle too far. In almost the final letter he penned from Borth, Thring replied to Bell:

I had heard what an astonishing exhibition the rector made of himself at the meeting. This last year sees to have taken him quite out of his depth, and upset all his shallow water experience... If the form the thing takes is starting a candidate in opposition to the rector, I do not think I ought to let myself be nominated, but if the rector is ousted first, and then there follows an election, I should not object to take it. I see no objection whatever to you standing... it is absolutely necessary for the school to... take part in the parish politics. But I could not bring myself to appear before an Uppingham audience as in any way

⁶⁸ Pateman, a solicitor, worked in the practice of William Sheild, which handled many of the school's property purchases, and was a close neighbour of Bell. See ch 1. section 1. Information from Peter Lane.

⁶⁹ Bell: *Letterbook*: Bell to Mullins 8 March 1877 *Letterbook*.

⁷⁰ *Mercury* 6 April 1877.

⁷¹ UA: Thring to Revd. AH Boucher 21 February 1877.

challenging direct comparison with the Rector. He is no antagonist for me.⁷²

10) BELL AND CHILDS

Bell had one further, personal, issue to revive. As a result of periodic gossip in support of Dr Childs which had filtered down from Borth (culminating in the hero's farewell accorded there to him), Bell was concerned to ensure that Childs should not be allowed to continue as the school's medical officer once it returned to Uppingham. He wanted to protect his own position and his income, so it was hardly surprising that he suggested Childs would not have the time to do both teaching and doctoring.

He also suggested that it would not be wise for Childs to publish a report on the typhoid outbreak which he was apparently planning. Such a report might well not suit Bell's own purposes, given some of the earlier accusations of negligence made against him, but he was also correct to reckon that, with a surfeit of reports already, a further one would merely revive old controversies. He wrote to the ever-patient Jacob a number of times on the issue, culminating in a long self-justification on March 21st, following a visit from Childs himself.⁷³

Bell was convinced that Thring had promised, back at the end of 1875, that Childs would be employed merely as a science master. Childs, however, was determined to continue practising medicine at least to some extent, and claimed that Thring now proposed that each housemaster should choose between the two of them. Bell feared that if this went ahead, Childs might later resign as science master and start a practice of his own in Uppingham. He was 'in doubt as to whether he should trouble Mr

⁷² UA: Thring to Bell 19 April 1877.

⁷³ Bell: *Letterbook*: Bell to Thring 21 March 1877.

Thring' about it; it seems clear that he hoped Jacob 'would do the troubling for him'.⁷⁴ Jacob replied that Bell should write to Thring himself, which Bell duly did on March 21st.⁷⁵ As it turned out, he need not have worried. Thring wrote back confirming that on this issue, Bell would have his support.⁷⁶ Bell wrote at least two letters of thanks in response.

11) THE SCHOOL'S RETURN

The *Stamford Mercury* confirmed at the start of April that the school's return was fixed for May 6th.⁷⁷ The works were done; water was flowing and new drains were in place. The trustees had directed – this time, uncontroversially - that the School should return at the start of the following term. But they were now in dispute with Thring over the size of his claim for expenses, and they decided to require that he 'state each term what sums be required for plant and apparatus, and that he make special application to the trustees before incurring any expenditure beyond the amount granted for this purpose'. Once the school was back, they were determined to tighten their grip on its administration – and its headmaster.⁷⁸

The return would not be a moment too soon, either for school or town. For the school, it had been a hard winter.⁷⁹ For the town, times were tough too. There appear to have been only one or two bankrupt businesses in Uppingham during the school's absence,⁸⁰ but it is likely that the overall economic effects had been marked. The

⁷⁴ Ibid: Bell to Jacob 10 and 13 February and 21 March 1877.

⁷⁵ Ibid: Bell to Thring, and to Jacob 21 March 1877.

⁷⁶ UA: Bell to Thring 26 March 1877.

⁷⁷ *Mercury* 6 April 1877.

⁷⁸ Trustees' Minute Book 16 February 1877.

⁷⁹ See appendix 5 section 4.

⁸⁰ Based on the *Mercury* reports, and on the bankruptcy notices in the *London Gazette*. The financial misfortunes of Thomas Freer (timber merchant and carpenter) on 9 May 1877 might possibly be connected with the school's absence, but there is no evidence. It may possibly have caused the

Stamford Mercury carried a description (9 March) of the spring fair in Uppingham, as it always did. Despite ‘the usual accompaniment of steam-horses, swing boats and rifle galleries etc... not much business was done’. With the school absent for so long, money was tight for such luxuries.

Thring returned to Uppingham on April 24th 1877:

with wonderfully mixed feelings... thankfulness to God for a page turned and closed; intense dislike of the place, mixed with a feeling of home and being master once more in my own house; the old constriction of stomach and feeling of dread, mixed with a sense of no longer being at the mercy of others, and subject to the racket and disturbance of hotel life...⁸¹

Messages of congratulations on the school’s return poured in – including one from a fellow-headmaster: ‘In my judgement your exodus was one of the bravest exploits ever performed, and you deserve to be hung all over with Victoria crosses... you will be in the world of immortal achievements’.⁸² A week later Thring noted:

The town is really making a grand demonstration: arches and flags all up in the street, and they must have taken much time and care and spent much money in doing it. This calling out of feeling and drawing attention to the school, is a new start in life here... a signal refutation of the calumnies vented on us last year, and the whole moral atmosphere of the place will no doubt be

bankruptcy of William Wilford (bookseller and stationer) on 14 November - but most, if not all, of the school’s stationery needs would have been met by its staunch ally, John Hawthorn.

⁸¹ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 69: Thring’s diary 25 April 1877.

⁸² Ibid pp. 70-71: author and date unknown.

changed in future...⁸³

The banners and triumphal arches of evergreen: 'Welcome home', 'flourish school: flourish town' and 'Uppingham School: a good name lives for ever' heralded two evenings of triumphant processions soon after the pupils returned. 'The reception on Saturday night was even better than Friday, and the whole town was in a wonderful fervour of enthusiasm'.⁸⁴ The *Stamford Mercury* recorded it all in great detail, praising Thring's 'determined efforts', and describing how flags were hung from houses, with so much streamers and so much bunting 'that it would have done honour to a royal visit to a town four times as large as Uppingham... There was scarcely a house which did not contribute its quota towards the gaiety of the scene'.⁸⁵

Mr White (the heroic carrier of the voting slips a year earlier) had large welcoming displays outside his ironmonger's shop in the High Street – as did Mr Dolby, the tailor a few doors away. Dr Bell's surgery was bedecked with chinese lanterns.⁸⁶ The bus from Seaton arrived; its horses were detached and pupils then dragged it around the town. Bands played, and many cheers were given. The only sour note was sounded by Wales, who initially declined to have the church bells rung (although he later relented) - possibly out of pique that Thring had recently just been elected to replace him as president of the town-school mutual improvement society.⁸⁷

Three days later there was a ceremony at the school itself in which speeches of welcome were given by Dr Bell and John Hawthorn, who had played such a key role

⁸³ Ibid p.70: Thring's diary 3 May 1877.

⁸⁴ Ibid: 7 May 1877.

⁸⁵ *Mercury* 11 May 1877.

⁸⁶ Bell: *Letterbook*: Bell to Jacob 21 March 1877.

⁸⁷ *Mercury* 4 May 1877. See also UA: Wales to Bell 26 April 1877.

in the ratepayers' revolt in the previous August. Hawthorn would have as much reason as anyone to welcome it back, and he observed that 'the absence of the school had pressed with severity on many tradesmen'.⁸⁸ Thring was presented with an illuminated address, and replied at length: 'We are united now as we never have been before'. He also remarked that, with the summer intake of pupils in addition to the 66 who had joined the school while it was at Borth, nearly 100 boys were seeing it in situ for the first time. The parents had remained loyal despite their criticisms when typhoid had first struck.

Normal life quickly resumed. In an effort to maintain the new spirit of co-operation, a town-school feast was held later in the summer, and a joint cricket match against a Derbyshire XI. A new recreation committee was planned; among its first achievements were a flower show, a concert and an athletics gathering,⁸⁹ as well as a big Guy Fawkes night celebration.⁹⁰ Lecturers on a variety of topics continued through the winter, as well as cookery and elocution classes and a number of play readings.⁹¹

An increasing number of households were being linked up with the new sewers,⁹² now that the water company had started to provide its service. The boarding houses had agreed reduced charges, given that their pupils were in situ for only part of the year.⁹³ The LGB had approved the company's regulations. Even so, Uppingham would not be disease-free for some years. There was a brief scare in late November

⁸⁸ *USM* Summer 1877.

⁸⁹ *Mercury* 22 June and 6 July 1877.

⁹⁰ *Mercury* 9 November 1877.

⁹¹ Skrine, JH: *A Memory of Edward Thring* (1890) p. 187.

⁹² Bell: *Letterbook*: Bell to William Banks 20 August 1877.

⁹³ UA: Undated document.

1877 when scarlet fever was reported at Bagshawe's boarding house up on the hill,⁹⁴ but fortunately the case proved to be an isolated and mild one. Three smallpox cases were recorded, (one fatal) in the town three months later.⁹⁵ Bell renewed his earlier complaint that Haviland had no right to visit Bell's patients,⁹⁶ with an added protest that Childs was also seeing some of them – both pupils and local families.⁹⁷

Late in 1878 a small-scale typhoid outbreak caused a new scare about possible impurity in the water. Brown, who was still RSA clerk at that date,⁹⁸ was bitterly criticised by Bell and others for causing alarmist rumours to fly by acting too slowly in getting a water analysis carried out. It eventually proved that the Company's water was not to blame.⁹⁹ Thereafter the new sewerage system appears to have had the desired effect – and there were also renewed calls for the abolition of all cesspits.¹⁰⁰

The RSA and the water company worked together in June 1880 to adopt a hydrant system for extinguishing fires, flushing drains and watering the streets. The *Mercury* reported that 'the water company agreed to put at the authority's disposal their tank of 30,000 gallons, and by starting their pump supply, 5000 gallons an hour could be kept up'.¹⁰¹

However, the water company ran into trouble, justifying the RSA's earlier fears about the adequacy of its specifications. The new wells which had been sunk between the

⁹⁴ Bell: *Letterbook*: Bell to Bagshawe 23 November 1877.

⁹⁵ *Mercury* 15 February 1877.

⁹⁶ Bell: *Letterbook*: Bell to Thring 7 March 1878.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*: Bell to Jacob 7 and 23 December 1878 and 14 January 1879. Judging by the comments when he left Uppingham, Childs was a popular figure: see appendix 6, section 4.

⁹⁸ See appendix 6 section 6.

⁹⁹ UA: Candler to Bell 11 September 1878. Candler was a director of the water company by then.

¹⁰⁰ Traylen, T: *Uppingham in Rutland* (1982) p. 24.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid* p. 24.

sanatorium and the workhouse initially produced large quantities of water – to the extent that the whole site around the new water tower became flooded. The water table soon dropped, and the supply became insufficient as demand increased.¹⁰² Two years later (1882) the summer supply was restricted to less than an hour per day, and in December 1883 in a desperate attempt to find additional supplies, the water company sank a large well costing £500 to a depth of 112 feet. They found nothing.¹⁰³

Headings were then driven from the bottom of the existing well in various directions before a new supply was discovered further to the north, which solved the problem for a while,¹⁰⁴ and there was sufficient water in August 1888 for ‘the old bathing place on the Seaton Road (to be) filled with water, after having been empty for several years’. Boating was provided on August bank holiday, with a band, dancing and fireworks.¹⁰⁵ In same year, however, when one new boy arrived:

...a school and town water-supply that was unscientific and somewhat precarious not infrequently gave rise to the rumour that if it did not rain we should be sent home, and supplied the perennial jest retailed to newcomers that the water in the school bath got so thick by half-term that once an adventurous fag, adept at diving and of name unknown, had in some past era, also unspecified, dislocated his neck by diving into the mud.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² UA: Matthews, Bryan: ‘The Uppingham Water Supply’, in Frowde, GC, (ed): *Borth Centenary Magazine* Summer 1977 p. 26.

¹⁰³ Traylen: *Uppingham* p. 25. In one sense the reasons for the RSA’s doubts and obstructions had been proved to be justifiable; water provision was then indeed a risky and inexact science.

¹⁰⁴ Under the school’s present playing field adjoining the Leicester Road. A water diviner helped with this discovery in 1892. See above: Matthews: ‘Water Supply’ p. 26.

¹⁰⁵ Traylen: *Uppingham* p. 25.

¹⁰⁶ Graham, JP: *Forty Years of Uppingham* (1932) p. 7.

Despite the problems which the company faced in these years, by 1900 the company's shares were selling at £6¹⁰⁷ - six times their 1876 price. Just before the end of the century it bought a new site to the right of the Gretton Road. The company existed until 1956, when its directors finally handed it over to the Uppingham Rural District Council, the body which was in many ways the successor to the RSA.

12) THE FINANCIAL RECKONING

For Thring and the masters, there were still financial consequences to be faced and issues to be resolved (especially with the trustees) from the decision to go to Borth. These are explained in appendix 6. He and the housemasters were hit twice, because as householders in the town they also paid a price: they could not escape the costs of their new water supply and extended sewers. The parliamentary local taxation returns for Uppingham in comparison with the neighbouring unions for the years 1874-82 are shown in full in appendix 7, but the tables below¹⁰⁸ show revealingly the extent to which the Uppingham RSA strained itself and its local community in an effort to effect the necessary improvements. On this issue, Barnard Smith and Wales, who had warned so repeatedly about the extent of the burdens of sanitary reform which would fall on hard-pressed ratepayers, were vindicated. Thring, too, had no doubt known that the costs would be substantial, but his bitter resentment of the RSA's long previous inaction had always prevailed over that realisation.

¹⁰⁷ Traylen: *Uppingham* p. 26.

¹⁰⁸ See also appendix 7. I am indebted to Dr John Davis for this line of enquiry.

TABLE 1: £ spent by Uppingham and its neighbouring RSAs: 1874-83.¹⁰⁹

Year	Uppingham	Oakham	Market Harborough	Melton Mowbray	Stamford
1874	2351	172	444	275	271
1875	639	81	775	570	288
1876	963	185	628	482	280
1877	3227	371	514	500	285
1878	2125	515	1085	513	289
1879	1489	2135	789	455	274
1880	898	831	893	529	257
1881	1175	659	673	226	1074
1882	1118	746	688	536	459
1883	1097	648	702	276	391
Total	15082	6343	7191	4362	3868

TABLE 2: Population of Uppingham and neighbouring RSAs: 1871-1882.

	Uppingham	Oakham	Market Harborough	Melton Mowbray	Stamford
RSA population 1871	12,443	11,142	16,081	19,926	17,821
RSA population 1881	12,029	10,978	16,285	20,483	18,334
Mean population	12,236	11,060	16,183	20,205	18,078
Town population 1871	2,464	2,911	2,362	5,011	6,686
Town population 1881	2,549	3,227	2,669	6,347	8,733
Mean population	2,507	3,069	2,516	5,679	7,709
Inhabited houses 1871	438	622	505	1,015	1,419
Inhabited houses 1881	432	675	544	1,263	1,847
Mean total	435	649	525	1139	1633
Rateable value 1875	97,015	92,658	147,173	136,359	91,556
Rateable value 1882	110,996	108,049	137,618	160,145	101,113
Mean total	104,006	100,354	142,396	148,252	96,335

¹⁰⁹ All tables drawn from 1871 census, and from Accounts and papers: Local government taxation – Abstract of sums raised and expended by Rural Sanitary Authorities, and Parliamentary Local Taxation Returns 1874-1882.

TABLE 3: Spending (£) per head of population(s) and per household: 1875-1882.

	Uppingham	Oakham	Market Harborough	Melton Mowbray	Stamford
Spending divided by mean RSA population	1.23	0.52	0.44	0.22	0.21
Spending divided by mean town population	6.02	2.072	2.86	0.77	0.50
Spending divided by mean total of inhabited houses	34.7	9.77	13.70	3.83	2.37
Spending divided by mean RSA rateable value	0.145	0.063	0.051	0.029	0.040

Whichever way one views the statistics, Uppingham was under far more financial pressure in these years than the communities around it. Moreover, the loan which it was struggling to repay in the late 1870s was at a level exceeded in only twenty or so RSAs throughout the whole of England and Wales, most of which were markedly larger in terms of rateable value.¹¹⁰ Uppingham RSA spending on both sewerage and water provision compares well with its immediate counterparts,¹¹¹ and the acceleration in its activity during 1874-83 compares very favourably with (for example) the almost static picture in Stamford, where chapter 3 showed that the existing state of affairs was far from ideal.

Even allowing for year-to-year fluctuations caused by the dates at which bills were paid by the individual RSAs, and for the fact that some had spent far more than others

¹¹⁰ TNA MH19/190: 2nd Annual Report of the Public Works Loan Board, 20 June 1877 and subsequent years.

¹¹¹ Melton Mowbray was divided: it also had a USA in the mid-1880s.

on improvements in the years immediately before 1875,¹¹² the overall pattern and the relative sizes of the various towns shows that the property owners of Uppingham had to pay dearly for their improved facilities - and for the loans taken out to finance them.¹¹³

13) CONCLUSION

This final phase in the Uppingham typhoid saga, like the earlier ones, shows the domination of business factors over medical ones in driving public health outcomes – and in determining the priorities of medical practitioners. Once again local events drove national ones. It also demonstrates the importance of local personalities in local affairs and local government – some of them more intransigent than enlightened.

The origin of the Uppingham typhoid outbreak and the identity of its carriers were never established. The battles surrounding it, however, played a distinctive part, not only in securing proper sanitary and water improvements for the town of Uppingham but also in the development of medical care in boarding schools, as evidenced in the successive, ever-larger editions of Clement Dukes' book *Health at School*.¹¹⁴ The 1905 edition laid down the key ways in which the risks of epidemics could be minimised: instant isolation of the first case; rigorous quarantine arrangements; thorough disinfection (and the burning of all books used by the infected person); plenty of space and ventilation in dormitories; efficient drainage; pure water; and a high state of pre-existing health in pupils to build up resistance to infection.¹¹⁵

¹¹² The two larger towns had started accelerating their spending in the years before 1875: cf Oakham, which saw a sudden leap in spending in 1879.

¹¹³ Oakham had loan commitments which were nearly as big (c£4,000) from 1878; by contrast, Market Harborough's loan was under £100; Melton Mowbray's was between £200 and £300 in this period.

¹¹⁴ See appendix 4, both sections.

¹¹⁵ Dukes, Clement. *Health at School considered in its Mental, Moral and Physical Aspects* (1887) pp.

Whether Dr Bell ever read it, and if he did, whether he heard echoes of Haviland within it, is not recorded. After their time, as John Honey records:

In the early decades of the [twentieth] century, a schoolmaster could still notice that illness was common enough to be a major topic of conversation in public schools – ‘what epidemic sickness had plagued the school last year, or last term, and what was likely to plague this term’.¹¹⁶ Epidemics themselves were to become less common, and certainly less virulent, after the development of chemotherapy (e.g. M & B) in 1936 and the antibiotics in the 1940s, leaving the empty school sanatoria as huge white elephants to be adapted where possible in our own day as additional boarding houses.¹¹⁷

270-1. (There were subsequent editions in 1984 and 1905.)

¹¹⁶ Simpson, JH: *Schoolmaster's Harvest* (1954) p. 124.

¹¹⁷ Honey, JR de S: *Tom Brown's Universe: The Development of the Victorian Public School* (1977) pp. 166-167.

CONCLUSION

1) CONTEXT

The story of Uppingham's typhoid outbreak takes the historian beyond the conventional public health histories that detail legislative achievements, and the grand structural schemes and local sanitary problems of England's bigger cities. It provides us with an intimate view of a small community in which, once a crisis broke, rivalries, fears for the future, pre-existing economic and other tensions threatened to tear apart the personal relationships and local government and economic structure of a very hierarchical rural society. It provides a contrast with the extensive work already done by historians on large urban communities.

In the 1870s, provincial England was just beginning to have to come to terms with public health reform. Uppingham's experience throws light on the problematic nature of that reforming process. First, it makes clear the inadequacies of local government machinery in the crucial period. Both small town government officials and the LGB in London were in a new and strange world, feeling their way towards managing the processes of reform, in the period between the public health acts and the setting-up of county councils two decades later.

Secondly, this micro-history reveals the complexities of small town government. It uncovers the social and personal tensions between the town's leading personalities and the professional rivalries of the local doctors. Thirdly, this was a time when public expectations about health provision were rising dramatically in the wake of growing scientific research. Uppingham shows how slowly medical knowledge

filtered down from centres of knowledge into the localities – and how critically important such knowledge was, as both new and re-established boarding schools expanded their pupil population.

Finally, it shows that the traditional view of these events as the struggle of a victimised school against an incompetent and uncaring town is far too simplistic. Its assessment of Thring's leadership will aid any future biographer. In all these ways it complements, or adds to, existing scholarship.

Thanks to the records possessed by the school, the Record Office for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland and the National Archives, and through the work of a group of very active local historians, it provides us with a uniquely detailed study of a rural community in crisis.

2) LOCAL THEMES

a) UPPINGHAM AND BORTH

In one sense, the detailed events described in this thesis help to confirm the traditional assertion of Thring: 'That year at Borth stands alone in the history of schools'.¹ It has now become clear, however, that historians, by concentrating so much on Thring's imaginative venture in removing his school to Borth when typhoid struck, have hitherto paid too little attention to surrounding events in Uppingham.

Analysis of the unfolding events in Uppingham, especially after the school left for Borth, seems to develop two major themes of this story: the complexities of the

¹ UA: Borth commemoration sermon, 1880.

contemporary local government and rating systems, and the depth of the antipathy between the leading local personalities. The way in which the tradesmen largely stood on the side lines until their half-hearted attempt to stage a revolt in March 1876, followed by their much stronger protest later in the summer, indicates the conflicting loyalties, fears and economic threats being brought to bear on them in this situation.

b) THE HISTORICAL REPUTATION OF THE UPPINGHAM RSA

There can be little doubt that the RSA was ill-equipped for the challenges posed over a long period by the growing town and school. Its leaders were unable to tackle the technical and financial problems which this growth posed, and as the pressures mounted, they allowed their hostility to Thring (and their dislike of the way in which he had moved the school away from its local roots) to harden into defensiveness and inactivity in the face of crisis. In those senses, the traditional view of this Borth affair still holds good.

On the other hand, we need radically to reassess the circumstances which have led to the RSA being vilified. It is far too simple purely to portray it as uncaring, incompetent or driven by its desire to put Thring in his place.² The existing historiography tells only one side of the story, and the LGB papers, its minute book and Dr Bell's *Letterbook* all need to be used as balancing agents in respect of the diaries and letters, the school magazine and the subsequent writings of Thring's disciples. The RSA's room for manoeuvre was limited in the area of finance, its powers may well have been inadequate (as it often claimed, in its quest for USA status), and it was faced by demands for time and expertise which its voluntary,

² For example, in Parkin's commentary: see Parkin GR, (ed): *Edward Thring, Headmaster of Uppingham School: Life, Diary and Letters* (1898) vol. 2 p. 3.

amateur officials were wholly unequipped to meet. Although its hostility to the private water company can be seen as vindictive, it had legitimate technical concerns, justified by the town's continuing shortage of mains water in the years up to 1900, and by the prospect of costly digging-up of roads, an act over which it would have had no legal control. This shortage also justifies its opposition early in 1877 to the speedy installation of WCs in the workhouse.³

Thring's vituperative attacks on it are understandable, given the situation he faced – but they tell only part of the story. He used outside contacts in a way not open to the RSA. The latter deserves a better reputation than it has previously enjoyed for the action it had already taken by 1875, and for the generally efficient way in which its minute book demonstrates that its affairs were run. It really was caught between the desires of local people for economy on the one hand and action on the other.

3) THEMES RELATING TO PUBLIC HEALTH

a) REACTIONS TO TYPHOID

Uppingham's experience very much confirms the absence of any agreement about the causes of typhoid during the 1870s – or of the measures necessary once it broke out. There was a general recognition of the threat from polluted water, and of the dangers of wells being too close to cesspits, but Haviland's criticisms of many of aspects of the school's administration left open the possibility of miasmatic or other causes,⁴ and the recurrent analyses of water samples focused very largely on their chemistry rather than their microbiology – in line with what one would expect, given John Hassan's

³ See ch. 8 section 11.

⁴ See Haviland, Alfred: *Report on the late outbreak of Enteric Fever in Archdeacon Johnson's School, Uppingham, Rutland: June-November 1875* p. 20 for his comments on ventilation.

description of such work in this period.⁵ While both Thring and Bell probably deserve some criticism for failing to see the potential threat posed by the early cases of typhoid in the autumn of 1875, it should be borne in mind, when criticising them for the failure to stop boys visiting other houses or to isolate suspected cases early enough, that guidelines for school doctors on these and other issues were a feature of the 1880s and subsequent decades, rather than of the 1870s.⁶ They were probably also right to fear that sending pupils home would merely risk spreading the disease across England, as well as increasing the threat to the school's reputation and prospects.

b) THE WORKINGS OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The complex relationship between the town and the school reveals a network of personal, professional and other relationships and rivalries which the typhoid crisis was bound to strain to the limit. Old friendships were put at risk (e.g. between Hodgkinson and Wales). Professional competition acquired a new dimension (the law practices of William Sheild and WH Brown). Within the former practice, two partners may have found themselves on opposite sides (Sheild, as a guardian supportive of Barnard Smith, and Pateman, who favoured the school). Similar tensions may have existed between medical competitors (Dr Walford and Dr Brown would have been only human if they wondered periodically whether either of them might be called on to replace Dr Bell as school doctor – or whether Dr Childs would gain the post).

There were conflicts of loyalty for many – especially those loyal to Wales as rector, yet opposed to him as guardian (including John Hawthorn and, later, churchwarden William Compton). Not all the shopkeepers were dissenters; some were stalwarts of

⁵ Hassan, John: *A History of Water in Modern England and Wales* (1998) pp. 23-25 and p. 48.

⁶ See chapter 5, footnote 93.

Wales's parish church. It needs little imagination to picture the professional pressures on someone such as JC Guy, the bank manager, who no doubt had to deal with supporters of both sides – or the personal fears of those who held land from the rector, whose influence in both real and less tangible ways extended so widely: a godly man perhaps, but one not lightly to be crossed.

While no specific evidence has emerged of traders keen to replace rivals as suppliers to the school and its houses (whose housemasters would have had the discretion to choose where to place their patronage), in a town with a large number of suppliers of certain goods and keepers of certain types of shops (see chapter 1) this must have been an additional dimension. Thring would certainly have had scope to put some of their premises out of bounds if they failed to back him, yet the disapproval of the omni-influential Wales was not something to be courted lightly, either. He could almost be said to exemplify Wohl's 'tight little oligarchy'⁷ in his own person, given his many and varied roles – although that label is perhaps more aptly applied to the guardians as a whole. There is plenty of evidence of the existence of Mingay's *middle class elite*⁸ or Howkins' *lieutenant class*.⁹

As the crisis developed during 1876, many of the traders and small businessmen had increasingly to balance their desire for limits on rate increases with their desire for sanitary improvement (Hamlin's *shopocracy* mind-set)¹⁰ with their fear of what a prolonged absence by the School, would do to their businesses (Bamford's description

⁷ Wohl, Anthony: *Endangered Lives* (1983) p. 167.

⁸ Mingay, GE: *Rural Life in Victorian England* (1977) p. 167.

⁹ Howkins, Alun: Overview: 'Rural Society and Community', in Collins, EJT, (ed): *The Agrarian History of England and Wales, VII, 1850-1914* (Cambridge, 2000) p. 1501.

¹⁰ Hamlin, Christopher: 'Mudding in Bumbledom: On the Enormity of Large Sanitary Improvements in Four British towns 1855-1885' *Victorian Studies* 32 (1988) p. 57.

of the School as patron/client)¹¹ – which explains the gradual but decisive change in local mood away from support for the RSA during 1876. In March the traders petitioned for urgent action, but then let Bell and the housemasters make the running at the crucial meeting with the RSA; later in the year it was shopkeepers Hawthorn and Compton who were prepared to give the lead. The extent to which agricultural recession was already being felt, and instances of individual business bankruptcies, may be hard to pin down, but the prospects were real enough.

In all these ways Uppingham, with its complex individual and group links within a small, geographically confined community supports Howkins' idea of the market town as a *pays*,¹² and Bamford's description of how boarding schools operated within such towns.¹³

c) STRAINS ON THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE

The fierce invective of Thring and his well-connected supporters (many of them such as Lord Gainsborough, Sir Charles Adderley and Sir Henry Thring, well-placed to exert public pressure on his opponents) has hitherto served to portray the RSA as supine, incompetent and vindictive. It would be hard to exaggerate the inability of the local government system to cope with them. All the sources of resistance identified by Hamlin¹⁴ and Bartrip¹⁵ – inadequate legislation, treasury strictures, a lack of (and the

¹¹ Bamford, TW: *Rise of the Public Schools: A Study of Boys' Public Boarding Schools in England and Wales from 1837 to the Present Day* (1967) pp. 192-3.

¹² Howkins: 'Overview' p. 1501.

¹³ Bamford, TW: 'Public School Town in the Nineteenth Century', *British Journal of Education Studies* (1957) pp. 25-36.

¹⁴ Hamlin: 'Bumbledom' p. 60.

¹⁵ Bartrip, PWJ: *Mirror of Medicine: A History of the British Medical Journal* (Oxford, 1990) pp. 52-57.

inconsistency of) technical expertise, a fear of errors and legal consequences thereafter - can be seen in Uppingham.

The RSA was certainly not blameless. It appears to have done little to prepare the ratepayers for the need for greater expenditure. Despite the existence of so many young people in a small town in term-time, the water supply was wholly inadequate, because it relied on polluted wells. It had signally failed to ensure that the recent new works were subsequently maintained and cleaned. It is debatable as to whether it could have done more to encourage local householders to link their houses up to the new drains. It was just as defensive at times as Dr Bell (whom it criticised so much). Its actions were nearly always reactive rather than proactive, and during the spring and summer months of 1876 it showed a remarkable lack of urgency (highlighted in chapter 7). It can be accused of double standards in its outspoken criticism of the school at the same time as it presided over sanitary conditions which were clearly inadequate in both the workhouse and the national school (chapter 8). Wales' conflict of interest as both a leading RSA figure and a school trustee would surely cause more than passing comment today.

However, there are a number of arguments in the RSA's defence. The way in which both the town and the school populations had grown during the previous half-century, and the extent to which improvements had *already* been carried out, highlight the difficulty that the RSA had in balancing progress, cost and public opinion. It could not raise rates at will: the local ratepayers would – and could- take only so much, financially. It had not courted the development of the school to a size which put so much pressure on local services, and it has been shown that the RSA's finances were

stretched to (if not beyond) reasonable limits. The pressure of mortgages identified by Alan Rogers¹⁶ parallels that which RJ Morris has identified in the Paradise district of Oxford.¹⁷

Its members could not be expected to be experts on the legal and technical complexities of sanitation and water supply, and it was wise to be wary of assigning large parts of the town to the new water company without proper assurances about the long-term implications for access and maintenance issues, or about the charges to be levied on local inhabitants.

These issues challenge some of our modern assumptions about government infrastructure at national, and particularly at local, levels. By contrast with the 1870s, early twenty-first century governments employ an army of paid officials to enact complex legislative change on the ground, to offer sophisticated medical expertise and to provide economic protection for individuals at risk. All these were evident (for example) in the government's mass-slaughter response to the outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease in rural areas in 2001.¹⁸

By contrast in 1875, local government was run by volunteers with little technical expertise, little time and no training. Thus, in an age before national government task forces and mobile crisis teams, and before the existence of county councils with their paid officials, the RSA itself had to commission a private consultant. We can only

¹⁶ Rogers, Alan: 'Prosperous – But Precarious: Mortgages in the Local Economy of Uppingham in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries': *Family and Community History* 8/2 (Nov. 2005) pp. 105-122.

¹⁷ Morris, RJ: 'The Friars and Paradise: an Essay in the Building History of Oxford 1801-1861' *Oxoniensia* 36 (1971) pp. 72-98.

¹⁸ See Woods, Abigail: *A Manufactured Plague? The History of Foot and Mouth Disease in Britain* (2004) p. 140; also DEFRA: *Origin of the UK Foot and Mouth Disease epidemic in 2001* (2002).

speculate as to what Rogers Field charged it for his work, but it may well have been formidable. The guardians and their successors would also be the ones who had to deal with the long-term effects – financial and practical – of any major sanitary improvements, long after Thring had retired, left Uppingham or died. The rapid rises in rates after 1877 show that their earlier caution was based on a sense of realism. Even if they had practised financial prudence in the fifteen years up to 1875, they did not have Hennock's other two prerequisites for a RSA wishing to carry out a sustained programme of improvements: political skill and substantial revenue over and above the rates.¹⁹

Ultimately it took the death of Barnard Smith to quieten the atmosphere of animosity which was still prevalent even at the end of 1876, and to ensure that in early 1877 progress was rapidly made to enable the school to return at Easter.

d) THE CRISIS AND THE DOCTORS

In different ways, the pressures on both Bell and Haviland were very real. Bell was certainly defensive (both to parents and to the Authority), and we cannot be sure how open he was with Thring himself. He appears to have been inadequate to the task he faced - both in his initial diagnoses and preventive actions – but typhoid was hard to diagnose with certainty, and the practical implications of confining pupils to houses or sending them home to spread the infection far and wide were underestimated at the time. As already noted, there was little accessible literature to guide him.

¹⁹ Hennock, EP: 'Finance and Politics in Urban Local Government', *Historical Journal* VI, 2 (1963) pp. 217-8.

He was under acute personal pressure, both in terms of his reputation and his livelihood. His regular disputes over territorial matters, both with Haviland and Childs, confirm what Anne Digby has written about the ferocity of the medical market.²⁰ Once the crisis developed, he did all he could to protect the school's position – which (it could be argued) would be in the interests of his future school patients.

In many ways his territorial jealousies, together with those of Thring himself, reflected on popular perception of the public health movement as the province of busy-body inspectors who threatened the long-held notion that an Englishman's home (or school) was indeed his castle.²¹ There are parallels here with the tensions between twenty-first century boarding schools and aspects of the social services inspection system.

Haviland too had a reputation to protect: even as a newly-arrived MOH, some of the blame would stick to him (by association in the public mind, at least), if the epidemic spiralled out of control. His passionate commitment to sanitary reform was undoubtedly genuine, yet his actions made no concessions to the logistical difficulties which the school faced in restricting the movement of pupils, and he made concerted action much harder to achieve. It can be argued that he was doing precisely what his job required him to do – and that the fatalities which occurred so soon after the pupils' return to school in the autumn confirmed the school's inadequate response to the June case.

²⁰ Digby, Anne: *The Evolution of British General Practice 1850-1948* (Oxford, 1999) p. 13 and p. 65. See also Wilkinson, Anne: 'The Beginnings of Disease Control in London' (Oxford D.Phil. thesis, 1980) pp. 23-28.

²¹ Digby, Anne: *Making a Medical Living: Doctors and Patients in the English Market for Medicine 1720-1911* (Cambridge, 1994) pp. 300-301.

If he was a 'closet miasmatist' (as one contemporary reviewer suggested),²² this is not surprising, given the precarious state of knowledge at the time, although there is plenty of evidence in the variety of the criticisms of the school in his report that he was trying to ride contagionist and miasmatist horses simultaneously.²³ The strident tone of his report in 1875-6, and the vehemence of his outbursts in late 1876 and early 1877 against the siting of the water works near the sanatorium and in protest against deficiencies in other parts of the town suggest a man prepared to use invective to mask a lack of definitive causal evidence, a suspicion confirmed by the judgements of Revd. Talbot in the 1880s²⁴ and Professor Barrett much more recently.²⁵ But he had a huge area to police, and he lived far away from Uppingham; once he left after his periodic visits, he did not have to live with the short-term consequences of his actions.

One of the surprising features of this whole affair is the absence of any apparent debate about the epidemiological questions – by Thring and Bell, the clergymen - or even Haviland himself, who seems to have regarded the cause as a mixture of bad air, too much dirt and human organisational failings. This suggests that contemporary epidemiological knowledge, debate and speculation in the capitals of Europe and larger towns of England were indeed slow to filter down into rural areas – although it could be argued that Thring had more pressing concerns to deal with than medical theory. The limited extent to which the existing water supply was analysed for impurities, and the reluctance of the RSA to sanction a new one based on private

²² Anonymous: 'A Review of Geographical Distribution of Heart Disease, Cancer and Phthisis by Alfred Haviland', *Athenaeum* 4 March 1876 p. 333

²³ Haviland: *Report* p. 20.

²⁴ See appendix 6 section 5.

²⁵ See ch. 3 section 6.

initiative tend to support the findings of Hamlin²⁶ and Hassan²⁷ that Uppingham's epidemic came a little too early (i.e. *before* the 1880s) for decisive action to be taken either to eliminate bad drainage or foul water supplies.

e) THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD

In the absence of a decision-making body at county level, the LGB was the only organisation above local level which could help to address local problems, and the Uppingham epidemic confirms that it too was inadequate to the task it faced. With so many authorities to oversee, and such a huge range of questions from them to consider, it is scarcely surprising if it was unable to cope with rising public expectations about public health, or with being the repository for business in which other government departments did not wish to be involved. In this sense it has something in common with the modern NHS.

The town's affairs would have been better served if Rawlinson's view that the LGB should always seek to persuade rather than coerce,²⁸ had not been so prevalent – a feature of the story which supports the view that the RSAs did not have sufficient enforcement powers at their disposal. The LGB ignored the repeated pleas of the Uppingham RSA for greater bye-law powers and for urban status – yet the writings of Wright and Hobhouse²⁹ suggest that such powers would have been a real help to it.

²⁶ Hamlin, Christopher: *A Science of Impurity* (1990) p. 205.

²⁷ Hassan: *History of Water* p. 48.

²⁸ See ch. 2 section 7.

²⁹ Wright, RS and Hobhouse, Henry: *An Outline of Local Government and Taxation* (1884) pp. 28-31

The LGB's extreme reluctance to do anything which might undermine either the RSA or Haviland is understandable – as is its feeling that this epidemic was nothing exceptional in statistical terms, and that Thring was inclined to protest too much. Yet its failure decisively to back either the school in insisting that rapid improvements were carried out, or the town in approving an immediate infusion of funds and expert back-up meant that too little was done to carry out improvements during the three months after the school departed for Borth.

It is debatable whether it could have killed off the disputes between Haviland and Bell if it had taken a less long-suffering, balanced and neutral view of their feud. It could have adopted a more questioning view of Haviland's report, sensing that the report would only inflame an already difficult situation. The PWLB's comparative slowness in responding to the loan application was an additional complication in getting remedial action started.

The suspicion lingers that the LGB would have dealt more effectively with Uppingham's problems if a single overall case-officer had been assigned to it (as would probably have happened in modern times). However, the LGB papers reveal that Sclater Booth, Sir John Simon, John Lambert, Robert Rawlinson and other officials all took decisions at various times, with no obviously logical pattern and no one apparently in overall control. Possibly the LGB was too susceptible to the last visitor or correspondent seeking to lobby it. Uppingham seems to confirm Royston Lambert's picture of two former government departments (the Medical and Poor Law Boards) crudely amalgamated with no unity of purpose.

f) QUESTIONS OF COMPARABILITY

There is much in chapters 2 and 3 to suggest that the Uppingham RSA was actually ahead of many of its local counterparts, both in the immediate area and amongst larger authorities in the area, notably Oakham and Stamford. Sanitary improvement was slow and patchy; when it came, it would certainly be expensive – as the comparative figures on expenditure in the five local RSAs demonstrate.³⁰

The way in which water supply nationally was primarily provided on a municipal basis at the start and end of the nineteenth century, but with a trend towards private operators in between,³¹ suggests that we should not rush *too* quickly to condemn the Uppingham guardians for their resistance to the private water company in the summer of 1876. There was little consensus on precisely how best to provide water to small communities such as Uppingham.

As a boarding school, there is no shortage of evidence that Uppingham was not alone in facing the threat of epidemics, or in its inability to identify and implement ways of preventing them. It would be another decade before there was significant progress in epidemiology, or a concerted attempt amongst school doctors to counteract such threats.

g) THE ROLE OF DOMINANT INDIVIDUALS

The Uppingham epidemic demonstrates with great clarity the limitations of national government in imposing its will on localities if dominant local influences were opposed to these policies, or to the speed at which their implementation was

³⁰ See appendix 7.

³¹ See Robins, FW: *The Story of Water Supply* (1946) pp 194-195.

proposed. In their different ways, Thring, Barnard Smith and Wales had in common an ability to inspire confrontation rather than agreement or compromise.

Barnard Smith was an experienced RSA chairman by 1875, and we have to presume that he felt he had a clear view of the speed at which rates could be allowed to rise – even in the face of the sort of crisis which the school faced in that year. He was poles apart from Thring temperamentally and in many other ways, but he appears to have been less directly confrontational towards the headmaster than William Wales.

Barnard Smith was not a school trustee, and he did not live in the town.

Uppingham was probably too small to have satisfied the energies and ambitions of both Wales and Thring, whose personalities and churchmanship were very different. Wales' irritation with the clergymen housemasters for declining to take a greater share of services in the parish church is likely to have been indicative of a wider tension – fanned perhaps by the experiences of his own childhood years, and by his interest over many years through the SPCK in the education of a class of young people untouched by the fashionable new boarding schools.

The same tendency to inflame rather than unite applies to Bell and Haviland. It would be hard to exaggerate the hostility between these two men. They too were of quite different temperaments: Haviland, the campaigning crusader with thwarted surgical ambitions, pitted against Bell, the doughty and defensive guardian of his medical territory: Bell, the needling introvert versus Haviland, the fiery extrovert with an eye for his audience or readership.

They also represented the polarities of contemporary medical training: Haviland had become an 'academic' doctor as well as a public health official, while Bell (content to remain a country GP) exemplifies the slowness with which new medical knowledge and ideas filtered down into the localities.

In the town there were men who (one suspects) had the power at least to delay or frustrate wishes from London. WH Brown was one such; Thring himself was another, through his refusal to allow the LGB to try to influence the RSA gradually and privately. On the other hand the contribution at various times of ratepayers such as John Hawthorn, William Compton and Charles White suggests that London had to rely on local frustration and local initiative to get matters moving.

4) AFTERWORD

Only when further comparable studies are done of rural communities will it become clear whether or not Uppingham's experience in these years was unique, or whether Barnard Smith and Wales, Bell and Haviland, have counterparts elsewhere. It is unlikely that there is another Thring waiting to be revealed.

Ultimately, just as Thring was unlucky to find himself pitted against such an able and forceful MOH as Haviland, so the two rectors were singularly unfortunate to encounter such a dynamic and imaginative headmaster as Thring. Maybe, in the end they all deserved each other – but through their struggles and antipathies Uppingham (town and school) secured greatly improved health provision in the end.

Image removed due to third party copyright

Distances from Uppingham (miles):-
Leicester 20 (west)
Northampton 25 (south)
Nottingham 30 (north)
Peterborough 20 (east)

UPPINGHAM IN 1876

PLAN OF UPPINGHAM

to accompany Mr Rogers Field's Report on
Public Sewerage & Private Drainage

Dated 6th Jan 1876.

REFERENCE.

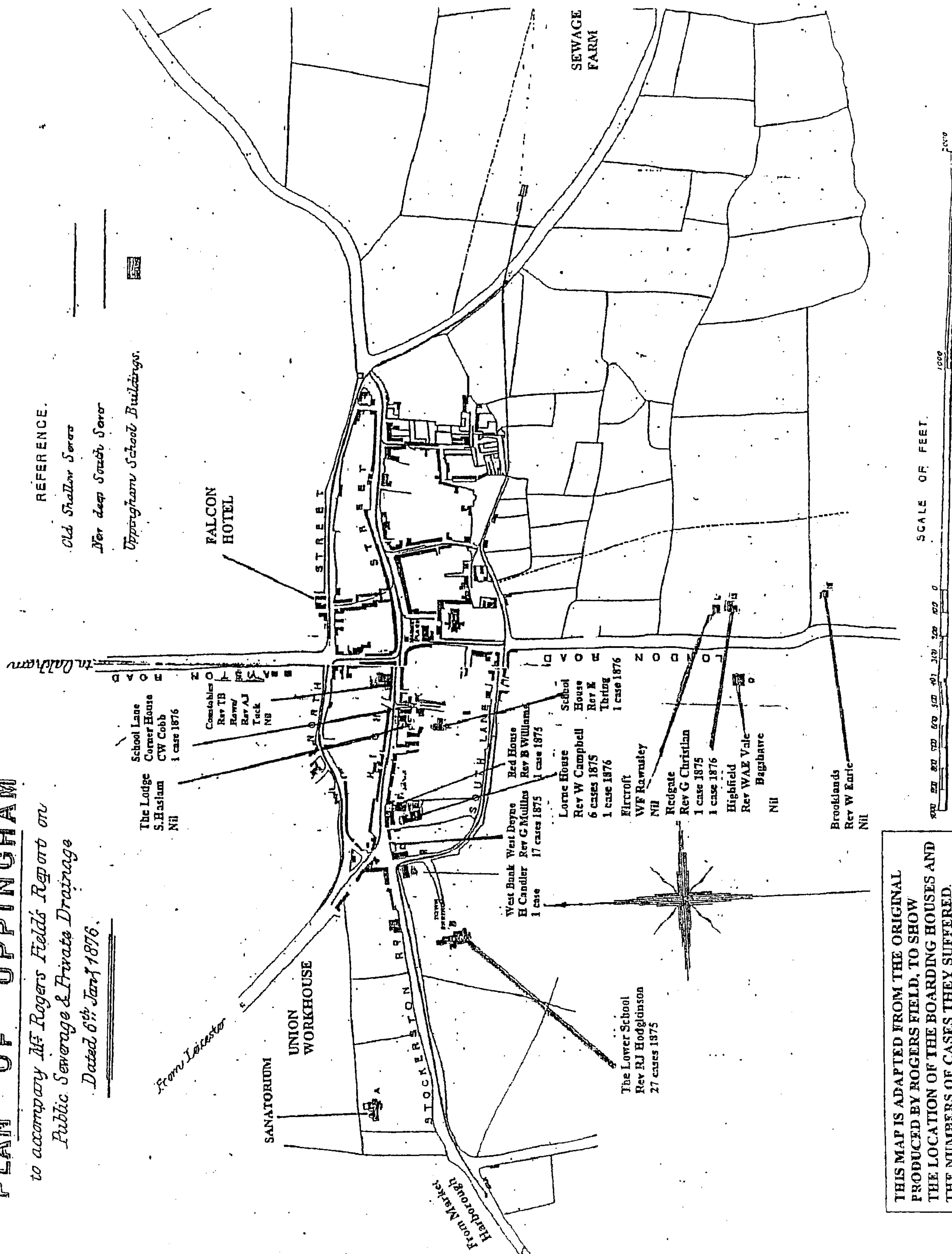
Old Shallow Sews

Deep Sews

Uppingham School Buildings.

FALCON
HOTEL

SEWAGE
FARM



THIS MAP IS ADAPTED FROM THE ORIGINAL
PRODUCED BY ROGERS FIELD, TO SHOW
THE LOCATION OF THE BOARDING HOUSES AND
THE NUMBERS OF CASES THEY SUFFERED.

Image removed due to third party copyright

APPENDIX 1: WHO’S WHO (mentioned significantly in the text)

NAME	FIRST NAME or initials	SCHOOL ROLE	TOWN ROLE	OTHER ROLE
Addeley	Sir Charles			Landowner
Bagshawe	WAEV	Housemaster		
Bell	Thomas	Medical officer	Doctor/surgeon Guardian	
Birley	TH	Masters’ trustee		Manch`r business
Brown	Frederick		Doctor/surgeon	
Brown	WH		Clerk to RSA Manor steward	Solicitor
Campbell	William	Housemaster		
Candler	Howard	Housemaster		
Childs	Christopher	Sanitary officer Science master		
Christian	George	Housemaster/chaplain		
Cobb	CW	Housemaster		
Compton	William		Churchwarden/wine shop	Petitioner v RSA (ch.7)
Earle	William	2 nd Master/housemaster		
Evans-Freke	Hon WC	Trustee	RSA ch`man 1877	Landowner
Field	Rogers		Sanit. advisor to RSA	
Fludyer	Revd Sir JH	Trustee		Landowner
Gainsborough	Earl of	Trustee		Landowner Lord of Manor
Haviland	Alfred		MOH	
Hart	Wm Garner	Grocer	Petitioner v RSA (ch.7)	
Haslam	Sam	Housemaster		
Guy	JC	Clerk to trustees	Bank manager	Water Bd secr`y
Hawthorn	John		Bookseller/printer	Water Bddirector
Hodding +Beevor				Water Bd solict`r
Hodgkinson	Robert	i/c the Lower School		
Jacob	WT	Masters’ trustee		L`pool business
James	Frederick		Insp of nuisances	
Johnson	AC	Chairman of trustees		
Lambert	John			LGB Prm`nt Sec
Mould	John		Churchwarden	
Mullins	George	Housemaster		
Pateman	John		RSA member	Solicitor
Rawlinson	Robert			LGB Chf engin inspr
Rawnsley	WF	Housemaster		
Rowe	Theophilus	Housemaster (to Dec 75)		(later) HM Tonbridge
Sclater Booth	George			LGB President. MP
Sheild	William		Manor steward	Solicitor
Simon	Sir John			LGB Chief M.O.
Smith	Barnard		RSA chairman	Rector, Glaston
Tarbotton	Alfred	Engin advisor		
Thring	Edward	Headmaster/housemaster		
Thring	Sir Henry			Parl`y counsel
Wales	William	Trustee	Authority member Rector	Landowner Lord of Manor
Walford	Augustus		Doctor/surgeon	Workhouse M.O.
White	Charles		Ironmonger	Vote-carrier: see ch 7.
Wortley	Edward		RSA member: chmn 1877	Farmer

APPENDIX 2 - THRING AND UPPINGHAM SCHOOL BEFORE 1875

1) THRING'S CAREER TO 1853

Thring had comparatively little experience of schools and school-mastering before he came to Uppingham, and prior to his application for the headmastership he had visited neither town nor school. Born in 1821 in Somerset, he was the third son in the family of seven children.¹ One of his brothers, Henry, became a notable parliamentary draftsman, and was knighted in 1873.² His father was a Somerset country gentleman and rector, who had once hoped to follow many of his own family into a military career, and could never understand why Edward wanted to run a small rural school and was concerned at the extent to which it swallowed up such capital as his son possessed.³

The young Thring learned much from the inadequacies of his own schooling locally at Ilminster and later at Eton. He progressed to King's College, Cambridge where he spent three years as a scholar and three as a fellow, but neither his mind nor his temperament were coolly logical enough for him to have been a great classical scholar.⁴ Ordained as a deacon in the Church of England in 1846, Thring went to his first curacy at St James's, Gloucester. A newly formed parish in a working class area of the city, it centred on the railways and the docks. It was a stark contrast with all the experiences of his life thus far: 'more than usually poor, almost proverbial for

¹ For a fuller description of Thring's family and early years, see Matthews, Bryan: *By God's Grace A History of Uppingham School* (Maidstone, 1984) or Rigby, Cormac: 'The Life and Influence of Edward Thring' (Oxford D.Phil. thesis, 1968) or UA: his unpublished manuscript.

² Sir Henry (1st Baron) Thring 1818-1907: Parliamentary Counsel 1868-86. Thring made full use of Henry's parliamentary contacts later on – for example, see ch. 5 section 1.

³ UA: Rigby manuscript ch. 28 p. 1.

⁴ Matthews: *By God's Grace*: p. 75.

ungodliness, vice and outrage'.⁵ He threw himself into the work with enthusiasm, experiencing slum life from the baptism of babies (many of whom promptly died) through to ministering to the dying. Because he threw himself so completely into his work, he suffered a breakdown after only a few months. Exhausted and suffering with boils and a sore throat, he went back to Somerset for a while, and to Great Marlow, with the intention of offering private tuition and examining. During this period he also produced his first educational book '*The elements of grammar taught in English*'.⁶

Sent to Rome by his worried family to prevent a possible engagement between his brother Godfrey and the daughter of a Bonn customs official, Marie Koch, he fell in love both with the city and with Fraulein Koch.⁷ An intended marriage now made it imperative that he find a good post.⁸ With little prospect of inheriting significant wealth from his parents, he returned to England and, despite the scepticism of his family, began looking for a headmastership.

2) UPPINGHAM SCHOOL BEFORE 1853

Archdeacon Robert Johnson had founded 'two faire free grammar schooles' at Oakham and Uppingham in 1584, along with a number of almshouses.⁹ Originally the school at Uppingham had held some twenty local boys, all educated free of charge. From the early eighteenth century it began to attract boarders from further afield, housing them in the former hospital, while still taking some local boys free or fee paying. By the start of the nineteenth century it was a grammar school of good

⁵ *The Churches of Gloucestershire, Historical Notes and Illustrations* 146, quoted in Rigby manuscript ch. 5 p 1.

⁶ Thring, Edward: *The Elements of Grammar taught in English* (1851).

⁷ Matthews: *By God's Grace* p. 76.

⁸ Little detail is known about Mrs Thring, or her sister who also lived in School House for many years. For an idealised picture, see Hoyland, Geoffrey: *The Man who made a School* (1946) pp. 12-13.

⁹ UA: Rome, RC: *Uppingham: the Story of a School* (undated manuscript).

standing with fifty boarders (1806). Lessons took place in the Elizabethan school room close to the church. Two earlier headmasters had built a number of tiny studies for the boys close to the school house; boys had garden-plots of their own on the hill which sloped away to the south.¹⁰

Revd Henry Holden, who ran it for eight years from 1845, had done much¹¹ - adding a library and a games field, a choral class and praepostors (prefects) on the model of Dr Arnold at Rugby, as well as opening the first house for boarders apart from his own.¹² At a time when many grammar schools focused narrowly on the basic educational skills, he encouraged the boys to broaden their intellectual interests – including geology and natural history.¹³ Not surprisingly (and somewhat characteristically), Thring tended to understate the achievements of his immediate predecessor.¹⁴

When Holden departed suddenly for Durham School in the summer of 1853, he took with him a dozen or so of the younger boarders (a practice common at the time). There was a brief interregnum under a temporary headmaster who proved out of his depth and unable to control the remaining pupils, before Thring arrived to take the school over on September 10th 1853.

¹⁰ For a more detailed description, see Matthews: *By God's Grace* chs. 1-4.

¹¹ Matthews: *By God's Grace* p. 69.

¹² Rogers, Alan: *The Making of Uppingham as Illustrated in its Topography and Buildings* (Uppingham, 2003) p. 25.

¹³ Bonney, TG: *Memories of a Long Life* (1921) p. 10.

¹⁴ See also Uppingham Local History Studies Group: *Uppingham in 1851: A Night in the Life of a Thriving Town* (Uppingham, 2001) pp. 53-55.

3) THRING'S FORMATIVE EXPERIENCES IN UPPINGHAM

Thring soon restored order, but he was under no illusions about what he had taken on. Even allowing for some exaggeration the challenge facing him was formidable:

I found myself in an unfurnished house; my own bed and a table and a few chairs were literally the only things left; two boxes of books of my own were all the things I had time to bring. A set of infamous servants all of whom in the course of the year I dismissed. I was alone, not yet being married... and thus without books, servants or furniture had at once to enter on a new school to make a start... And so the work began.¹⁵

When he made his first visit (17 August 1853) he had arrived by train at Seaton, and then walked the three miles to the school. This walk was one which he was to make many times in the years which followed, as he escorted prospective parents and worked off his own nervous energy. 'Having had their valises loaded on to a trap, [he] would trudge back with them to Uppingham, his sheep-dog at his side, no doubt expounding to them with infectious enthusiasm his principles of education'.¹⁶

The coming of railways to new parts of the country in that period made the establishment of rural boarding schools like Uppingham a great deal easier. Railways were a great connector, making what would once have been major expeditions into simple and quick journeys.¹⁷ They were also a product and a cause of the remarkable

¹⁵ Parkin, GR, (ed): *Edward Thring, Headmaster of Uppingham School: Life, Diary and Letters* (1898) vol. 1 p. 11.

¹⁶ Anon (WF Rawnsley): *Early Days at Uppingham under Edward Thring, by an Old Boy* (1904) p. 5.

¹⁷ Cherry, Gordon E and Sheail, John: 'The Experience of Change', in Collins, EJT, (ed): *The Agrarian History of England and Wales, VII, 1850-1914* (Cambridge, 2000) p. 1535.

economic prosperity of the time, based on manufacturing industry and the export of investment capital – although the first heroic period of railway-building ended as Thring arrived in Uppingham. Route mileage had risen fifteen-fold in the 1830s, and 7,500 miles were in use by 1852; there was a second wave of construction in the 1860s.¹⁸

Although Thring was to decry ‘railway progress’ as bringing ‘the old and new together too quickly’, he also saw the opportunities which it brought:

We stand on the threshold of a new world. Railways and steamships and telegraphs have made this earth of ours to all intents and purposes another planet... all the nations... are being suddenly poured together into one great tumultuous sea of stormy strife.¹⁹

Railways also produced plenty of schools for this new generation of fee-paying parents to choose from. In an era when fortunes were being made in the expanding manufacturing towns, there were plenty of prospective parents, and many schools were expanding or being created.²⁰ The mid-victorian era and its Great Exhibition of 1851 proclaimed an era of confident capitalism, and a strong movement to stave off what was seen as the foreign threat to outstrip Britain in industrial and artisan skills.²¹ The established gentry and the new professional classes and businessmen were all keen to invest in the type of public school education which Arnold had reformed and

¹⁸ Cherry and Sheail: ‘Experience of Change’ p. 1535.

¹⁹ UA: Thring’s notes in his New Testament.

²⁰ E.g. Cheltenham, Marlborough, St Edwards and many others. See Hoyland: *The Man who Made a School* p. 36.

²¹ I am indebted to Professor Alan Rogers for this point.

popularised at Rugby, despite being aware of the risk of their sons being exposed to killer diseases in such institutions.²²

Thus many of Uppingham's parents were the sons of manufacturers, merchants and the expanding professions, keen to ensure the good education of their sons.²³ Thring cast his net widely, and his reputation quickly spread; many of his parents had had far less formal education themselves than their sons would enjoy and, as word spread, these parents were attracted by Thring's firm principles and high ideas. One parent remarked: 'I am, every time I hear him, struck with how remarkably Mr Thring is one of those who "speak with authority" ...it is a thing that, in these days of unsettled belief, is invaluable...'²⁴

4) EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

The school represented the embodiment of his own educational philosophy. Despite the view of one of his later housemasters,²⁵ there is little evidence that he entered upon his life's work in Uppingham with any formal blueprint. He was probably much clearer through the experiences of his own schooldays at Ilminster and Eton about what he did not want than about what he wished to create. His own schooling had left its mark through misery. He described the Ilminster school as 'an old-fashioned

²² Honey, JR de S: *Tom Brown's Universe: The Development of the Victorian Public School* (1977) p. 212. See also appendix 4 section 2.

²³ Hoyland: *The Man who Made a School* p. 36. See also Bamford, TW: *Rise of the Public Schools: A Study of Boys' Public Boarding Schools in England and Wales from 1837 to the Present Day* (1967) pp. 17-38.

²⁴ Harford-Battersby, Charles F: *Pilkington of Uganda* (1899) pp. 10-12

²⁵ Rawnsley, WF: *Edward Thring: Maker of Uppingham School* (1926) p. 15. Rawnsley was an Old Uppinghamian of Thring's early years, who had returned to work at the school and who had become a housemaster. He wrote that on arrival in 1853 Thring had 'brought with him a note book in which he had entered a full list of all the changes which he would aim at in his new school and he never went back from this'.

school of the flog-flog milk-and-water-at-breakfast type²⁶ ...it was my memories of that school and its severities which first made me long to try if I could not make the life of small boys happier and brighter'.²⁷

Eton had left an even more lasting impression. Thring arrived there during the final years of the notorious Dr Keate, who had a reputation which rested on his inclination to flog wickedness out of his boys. Parents were, however, prepared to overlook many of the drawbacks of the Keate regime if it meant that their sons made connections into the aristocracy. There were only nine masters for 570 pupils; Keate himself used to teach over 100 boys at a time. In Long Chamber the scholars had been locked into the room at 8pm each evening for over ten hours with no adult supervision at all. It had been a regime based on squalor and bullying – what Thring described later as:

the wild, rough, rollicking freedom, the frolic and fun of that land of misrule with its strange code of traditional boy-law which really worked rather well as long as the VIth form were well-disposed or sober...cruel at times...there was no help or redress for anyone.²⁸

He survived it well; he was a successful schoolboy and became captain of the school, even if he was not its outstanding scholar. He was also at Eton long enough to see the start of the changes made by Keate's gentler successor, Hawtrey. Classes were subdivided, and the curriculum (previously centred on the classics and maths) was broadened by the addition of modern languages. Merit rather than seniority began to

²⁶ Thring, Edward: *Addresses* (1887) p. 4.

²⁷ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 1 p. 13. Parkin describes it as a part of conversation 'only a year or two before he (i.e. Thring) died, when driving from Alford towards Ilminster with a dear friend'.

²⁸ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 1 p. 23. Parkin states that it was included in 'a paper published in 1862'.

determine when a boy moved up the school. These were changes which not all pupils approved of, but they gave Thring ideas for the future.

The Gloucester experience was also formative in the working out of his educational ideals:

They tried all my patience, called every power into play.... Never shall I cease to be grateful to those impracticable, other-world boys, and that world of theirs which had to be got into... They bred in me a supreme contempt for knowledge-lumps, for emptying out knowledge-lumps in a heap, like stones at a roadside, and calling it teaching. They made me hate the long array of fine words.... They taught me the more valuable lesson still, how different knowledge which can be produced to an examiner is from knowledge which knows itself, and understands its own life and growth... How hard it was to get into shape, their shape, and fit the twists and comers of blocked and ignorant minds. But it was a glorious work.²⁹

Thring's ideals were developed over 35 years in a whole series of writings, as well as published sermons. An academically average boy should have as much time and money spent on him in the classroom as a brilliant scholar. He believed that 'A good teacher ought to rejoice in a stupid boy as an interesting problem' - in contrast to Arnold, whose dictum he believed was that 'the first, second and third duty of a schoolmaster is to get rid of unpromising subjects'.³⁰

²⁹ Thring: *Addresses* (1887) p. 5.

³⁰ See Tozer, Malcolm: 'Education for True Life: A Review of Thring's Educational Aims and Methods' *History of Education Society Bulletin* (1987) p. 24.

Boys needed privacy; Uppingham dormitories were to have partitions between beds, and curtains to shield them from the through corridor area. Moreover, each boy was to have his own small study – as a check against bullying and a safeguard for academic concentration. ‘The little boys most of all require a place for themselves... for they are the most unprotected, most exposed to temptation and most in need of refuge’.³¹

Good teaching required good staff. Unlike many schools of the time, Uppingham employed only a minimum of peripatetics, because such teachers would have only a passing interest in their pupils and no responsibility for their results. Classes would be allocated to staff according to their particular teaching talents rather than their seniority in the hierarchy. Even the housemasters would be included in this, as they would also be form masters, teaching mostly at levels which suited them best, for ‘to teach an upper class requires more knowledge, a lower more skill as a teacher’.³²

Early on he decided that a school of 25-30 boys aged 10-19 required just as many classes as one of 250-300, if the teaching was to be effective and the administration efficient. He was keen that 300 should be the maximum target figure for Uppingham (although it started to creep up towards 360 from the late 1860s). His reasons for this limit are revealing:

If there are more boys in a school than the headmaster knows personally, the headmaster ceases to be headmaster in the case of those boys he knows little of, and the masters who know them become superior to the headmaster.³³

³¹ Thring, Edward: *Education and School* (1864) p. 136.

³² UA: *Diary* I pp. 24-27.

³³ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 1 pp. 73-74: *Statement of the Headmaster*, 1875.

He regularly toured houses between tea-time and prayers; it gave him the chance to talk to individual boys, and also to keep an eye on standards and practices across the houses. He had very strong views about the importance of the house system:

A small number of boys are knit together in a little common-wealth. The housemaster and his wife have the entire management, subject to the main school laws ... They can, and do, become very intimate with their boys, and their boys with them. In fact, it is to both parties a home, and there is a home influence and home refinement about it... The boys, on their part, love their own house and uphold it. It has a character which they are jealous about.³⁴

He regarded his housemasters as central to the success or failure of his enterprise. Houses in schools of a dispersed nature tended to have greater variations of ethos; he wanted to give housemasters the job-satisfaction which comes from delegated authority. Individuality and variety helped recruitment; prospective parents could choose a housemaster and a style of house and management which they particularly liked and which they thought would suit their son. On the other hand, he wished to curb any risk of his housemasters becoming too powerful, and of houses becoming semi-independent fiefdoms for housemasters acting like barons in rivalry to a medieval king. This was a particular concern in a school with houses dispersed all through the town.

The housemasters also brought very different but complementary temperaments and capabilities to the enterprise – firm discipline, innate caution and love of cricket³⁵

³⁴ Thring: *Education and School* p. 174.

(William Earle, the usher and longest-standing member of staff, who had joined the school in 1849), financial acumen and solid gravitas (Campbell of Lorne House), organisational skills (Candler of West Bank, the mathematician/timetabler), scholarship (Sam Haslam of The Lodge), an ‘unbending demand for work’ (Charles Cobb, of the house on the corner of School Lane), and eccentricity, other-worldly godliness and calm resolution (George Christian, housemaster and school chaplain). As a body, they combined academic and sporting skills, as well as a wide variety of personal enthusiasms.³⁶

A boy not intellectually gifted should have opportunities to succeed in other occupations: ‘I don’t want stars or rockets. I want every boy to have a chance of showing his little light to help the world’.³⁷ A variety of academic needs and abilities demanded a varied curriculum – not merely the traditional intellectual subjects like classics and maths but practical skills too. Games and athletics had their place, although other opportunities were needed too:

In music, French, German, drawing, and various branches of natural science, such as botany, natural history, &c; or of physical science, as chemistry, electricity, statics, dynamics, &c., the most backward in classical knowledge can take refuge. There they can find something to interest them; something too which others do not know, something in which they can obtain

³⁵ Graham, JP: *Forty Years of Upping ham* (1932) pp. 53-73.

³⁶ *USM* portraits usually appeared when a member of staff retired or died. For example, George Mullins at West Deyne, a keen meteorologist and bee keeper, and William Vale Bagshawe, a lover of music and keen fisherman. Theophilus Rowe lectured to school and town alike on topics as varied as the surface of the moon, life in a lighthouse and marks on snail-shells.

³⁷ *Manchester Guardian* 2 November 1887: School speech on ‘Success in Life’.

distinction, and by so doing restore the balance of self-respect, or at least make some progress where many are quite ignorant.³⁸

Underlying his commitment to all types of pupil, to good teaching and to extra-curricular activity lay the concept of good 'machinery'. This he defined partly as bricks and mortar – high-quality houses and specialist teaching plant.³⁹ In Uppingham's case this would include not just workshops and a gymnasium, but also a swimming pool and an aviary. These facilities constituted an "Almighty wall" – a good school, its traditions and its ethos rooted in its buildings and plant, as well as in its personnel and in systems which worked well. There must be not only humanity but also efficiency: 'A good school must have a good system'.⁴⁰

All these things added up to what Thring called 'Life-power' or 'True life'. His evangelical leanings made him interpret this as Influence for Good - in ways similar to the Biblical idea of light shining in the darkness:

Life is nothing by itself, only a quiet, daily, ceaseless, little progress, a steadfast belief in a good cause, a working every hour the work of that hour because it is right and good, knowing nothing of what will come of it.⁴¹

His ultimate aim in education was not simply to inculcate knowledge, and he had a strong antipathy to any system driven merely by the need to pass exams. He railed

³⁸ Thring: *Education and School* p. 101: Most of these were on Thring's list of subjects which he regarded as important, in his evidence to the Taunton Commission in 1865. See also Tozer: 'Education for True Life' p. 27.

³⁹ Unsurprisingly, he did not specifically mention good sanitation and water supply.

⁴⁰ UA: Diary I p. 33.

⁴¹ UA: Sermon 133: Sexagesima February 1876.

against Robert Lowe and the Education department who believed in payment by results as a means to test the efficiency of state education.

Physically, Thring was a small man, but was fit, wiry and tough. He was an energetic and powerful teacher, very good with younger boys even if they occasionally felt overawed by his presence. He was in his element with the sixth form. Not all boys liked his lessons; he could use anger to awesome effect although it was usually controlled.⁴² Notwithstanding this, the boys liked and respected him, and nicknamed him 'Teddy'.

5) EXTERNAL BATTLES

Thring's ideas were not universally welcomed, and he had to fight a number of dramatic battles over the years. Having established his authority over both pupils and staff in the early years, he faced threats and opposition from outside. The mid-nineteenth century saw a series of inquiries into educational institutions.⁴³ Thring skirmished with the officials sent to inspect the school as part of the Schools Inquiry Commission which resulted in the Endowed Schools' Act of 1869. He profoundly disliked provision for central external examinations, and he feared that the Act would remove educational power from teachers and give it to administrators, and that it struck at the very heart of the independence he cherished and had hoped his school would preserve. Worst of all, seven major schools, the 'Clarendon Seven' (in which Uppingham was not included), were to be exempt - set aside as a social elite, less liable to be forced to go on reforming themselves.

⁴² See Hornung, *EW: Fathers of Men* (1912) p. vii.

⁴³ This began with one into the state of Oxford University in 1850, followed by the Newcastle Commission into elementary education in 1857, the Clarendon Commission into the 'great' public schools two years later, and the Taunton Commission of 1864 which investigated the rest.

He was dismayed when the first set of proposals from the commissioners included giving the governing body control not only over the finances and appointment of the Headmaster but also over the curriculum, methods and hours of work, and denying the staff the opportunity to have two elected representatives on the Board. Further discussions with the commissioners followed; they eventually gave way, but only after his staff rallied behind him, and after he had threatened resignation, persuading the masters to do the same, and after a group of parents from Liverpool and Manchester had galvanized 260 others (80% of the total) to fight the commissioners in parliament, threatening to empty the school if Thring were forced to resign.

One by-product of the struggle was the creation of the Headmasters' Conference (HMC). In response to some of the provisions of the Endowed Schools' Act, a group of leading Headmasters held a meeting in London. Out of this came the proposal for the first conference, which was held in Uppingham in 1869 - which is why Thring has often been seen as its founder, although Mitchinson (of the King's School, Canterbury) wrote later: 'I think that if I may fairly claim to have laid the egg which developed into the Headmasters' Conference, Thring did all the clucking necessary'.⁴⁴ As the HMC grew steadily in the years which followed, Thring (the antithesis of a committee man) was never a central figure in it, yet he regarded its birth as an essential part of the struggle to stop undue government encroachment on the independence of schools.

⁴⁴ *The Cantuarian* Vol. 22 (December 1946): see Rigby manuscript ch. 18 p. 19.

37 invitations were issued to the first conference; twelve headmasters turned up in bitterly cold weather, mostly by train, on the first day. These included Welldon of Tonbridge, who (far removed from the familiar leafy lanes of Kent) remarked of Uppingham that ‘Thring must be a wonderful man to have made a school like this in the midst of such a howling wilderness’.⁴⁵ Less than six years later, typhoid arrived in Uppingham, and Thring found his life’s work – and his livelihood – threatened with rapid extinction.

⁴⁵ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 1 p. 199. It took place just before Christmas 1869.

APPENDIX 3 UPPINGHAM UNION MEMBERSHIP (ROLLR DE1381/441)

Table removed due to third party copyright

APPENDIX 4

TYPHOID, INFECTIOUS DISEASES AND BOARDING SCHOOLS IN THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY

1) TYPHOID

Typhoid is acute and highly infectious, and is a systemic infection caused by the bacterium *salmonella typhi*. Untreated, it lasts between three and four weeks, killing about 10% of its victims and leaving 2% as permanent carriers. It is progressive – marked by the gradual onset of a sustained fever with headaches, cough, severe digestive discomfort and generalised weakness. It can also cause spleen and liver enlargement, and is sometimes marked by a rose-spot rash. The attack rate of the disease is in proportion to the number of organisms ingested. Almost unique among the *salmonellae*, its bacilli are adapted only to humans.¹

It is normally waterborne – i.e. contracted through drinking water contaminated with the bacterium *salmonella typhi*. It is often transmitted via sewage-contaminated water, or by flies which carry the bacterium from infected faeces to food. The bacillus can survive for many weeks both in water and in ice. Rivers, ponds and wells are all infected by carriers, either directly or via excreta washed down by rains or faulty sanitary systems. Thus control depends on separating sewage and drinking water.²

¹ Kiple, Kenneth F, (ed): *The Cambridge Historical Dictionary of Disease* (2003) pp. 345-346.

² Ibid: p. 346.

It can also be spread through contaminated food (especially by carriers handling milk, ice cream, fruit and salads, or as a result of shellfish growing in contaminated water), infected vomit, and typhoid pus.³

The typhoid patient usually ceases to excrete the bacillus within a month of his illness, but convalescent carriers may do so for up to about six months, and it can remain in chronic carriers for some years. There are also symptomless carriers – especially dangerous because their existence is often picked up only during the investigation of an epidemic, if at all. Some 3% of persons who have been infected, continue to excrete bacteria in either urine and/or faeces once restored to health, and thus become ‘healthy carriers’ who may infect others through handling foods, etc if hygienic precautions are not scrupulously followed.

Nineteenth century civil servants and doctors had a broad understanding of its water-borne and milk-borne nature, but little knowledge of precisely how this occurred. One leading nineteenth century MOH declared in 1889: ‘If there is one fact more certain than another in sanitary science, it is that enteric fever occurs chiefly and almost solely when there is an excrement-sodden condition of the soil’.⁴

The nineteenth century saw the gradual growth of the germ theory (water-borne ‘poison’) against the miasma theory (foul air or gases) and theories of contagion (person-to-person touch). Discoveries came slowly: Gerhard in the USA and Jenner in London published their descriptions of the different features of typhoid and typhus in the 1830s and 1840s. A decade later William Budd noted the connection between

³ Huckstep, RL: *Typhoid Fever and Other Salmonella Infections* (Edinburgh, 1962) p. 17.

⁴ Eyler, John M: *Sir Arthur Newsholme and State Medicine 1885-1935* (Cambridge, 1997) p. 42

typhoid outbreaks and faecally contaminated food and water – confirmed by John Snow's medical mapping of the Broad Street pump's effects during the 1864-5 London cholera outbreak.

However it was in the years just after the Uppingham epidemic that the key discoveries in bacteriology began to emerge. Eberth and Klebs identified the cholera and typhoid bacilli in 1880; Gaffky succeeded in culturing it four years later, and in the 1890s HE Durham and others devised the Widal test to diagnose it. By 1900-2 the first vaccines were available, and Robert Koch had pointed out the significance of the healthy carrier. At the 1867-9 hearings of the Royal Commission on water supply, germ theories had still been speculative. It was not clear why faecally polluted water only occasionally produced epidemic disease.⁵ Even though the germ theory gathered momentum in the years that followed, there was continuing disagreement about its precise nature, and a reluctance to abandon the miasma theory altogether. This explains why throughout the Uppingham epidemic several theories were pursued simultaneously.

In the 1870s, in cases of water-borne typhoid (as opposed to outbreaks caused by contaminated milk or other food), a few epidemics were dramatic, with a succession of patients rapidly affected when a normally safe water supply became seriously contaminated – but mostly there was a slow, on-going series of single cases or small groups appearing over quite a period of time, resulting from low-level pollution.⁶

⁵ Hamlin: 'Politics and Germ Theories', in Macleod, Roy, (ed): *Government and Expertise: Specialists, Administrators and Professionals 1860-1919* (Cambridge, 2003) pp. 113-114.

⁶ Hardy, Anne: *Health and Medicine in Britain since 1860* (Basingstoke, 2001) pp. 33-34.

All but the chronic carriers were hard to identify and isolate, although in an age when nearly all domestic work and cooking was done by females, it was recognized that chronic carriers typically tended to be middle-aged or elderly women.⁷ Methods of treatment were at best haphazard – depletion of blood and low diet, pouring cold water over the surface of the body, ‘shaving the scalp and applying cold embrocations’, or ordering that all the windows be kept open. There were herbal treatments based on hellebore root and alcohol (especially champagne) for the wealthy, elm or holly bark concoctions for the less so.⁸

In 1876 the *BMJ* estimated that about 100,000 people contracted typhoid each year – with perhaps another 40,000 undiagnosed cases. Because the average case lasted up to five weeks, it estimated that nearly 14,000 were ill at any one time, costing the country over £1m per year.⁹ Estimates of deaths per year varied; the *Times* suggested 10,000-12,000¹⁰ – although one contemporary study of waterborne typhoid put the figure at under 9,000.¹¹

Optimists noted that the disease was in numerical decline. Fatalities had markedly reduced from the 21,000 of 1866,¹² and the *BMJ* of May 1876 declared that deaths from fever in that year – 7,500 - were at their lowest annual total since 1837.¹³ But the rate of decline then slowed, and the threat remained real. One MOH wrote:

⁷ Topley, WWC and Wilson, GS: *Principles of Bacteriology, Virology and Immunity* (1975) p. 414.

⁸ Smith, FB: *The People's Health 1830-1910* (1979) pp. 247-8.

⁹ *BMJ* 26 Feb 1876.

¹⁰ *Times* 13 January 1876.

¹¹ Hart, Ernest: *Waterborne typhoid: A Historic Summary of Local Outbreaks in Great Britain and Ireland 1858-1893* (1897) p. 4 - confirmed by the Registrar-General's Annual Reports.

¹² Budd, William: *Typhoid Fever: Its Nature, Mode of Spreading, and Prevention* (1873) preface.

¹³ *BMJ* 6 May 1871.

We must all sorrowfully admit that notwithstanding skilled nursing and careful medical treatment, the ordinary course of typhoid is prolonged and perilous... excepting diphtheria it has probably the highest death-rate of all the infectious diseases prevalent in this realm.¹⁴

It was no respecter of classes or persons. Whereas louse-borne typhus and to a lesser extent cholera (water-borne) tended mostly to affect poorer city dwellers, typhoid was less confined to urban areas and could affect the highest in the land. It had claimed the life of the Prince Consort in 1861 and nearly carried off the Prince of Wales a decade later, when he contracted the disease while staying at a country house in Yorkshire.¹⁵ There was a major outbreak amongst undergraduates at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge in 1873, and typhoid claimed the lives of three Oxford undergraduates in January 1875.¹⁶

The extent to which knowledge about typhoid was only partial can be gauged from a leading article in the *Times* on 13 January 1876, in which the paper declined to choose between the miasma and germ theories. After describing how it attacked the intestines, it described it as 'a sort of smallpox, which affects the bowels instead of the skin...' In the absence of bacteriological knowledge it then stated:

It is spread abroad chiefly by discharges from the... intestine. These, in the natural course of things, find their way into cesspools and sewers and when they do so, they render poisonous the solid and liquid contents of these receptacles and also the gas which is evolved from them. The fever is

¹⁴ Andersen, AM: *The Antiseptic Treatment of Typhoid Fever* (Dundee, 1892) p. 5.

¹⁵ Wohl, Anthony: *Endangered Lives* (1983) pp. 1-2.

¹⁶ *Times* 2 and 6 January 1875.

reproduced mainly in three ways – first, by poisoned sewage obtaining direct access to drinking water, by leakage or soaking, and so being swallowed; secondly by the poisoned gas escaping from the sewers into water mains or cisterns, so that it is absorbed or dissolved by the water, and so swallowed; and thirdly by the poisoned gas making its way, through badly-trapped drains or other channels, into dwelling or sleeping rooms, and so being breathed by the occupants...

This was an age which associated odours very closely with disease.¹⁷ William Budd declared in 1873 that ‘the poison by which this fever spreads is almost entirely contained in the discharges from the bowels’, but he listed as subsequent source of infection: ‘the air of the sick-room’, followed by ‘the bed and body linen of the patient’ before he came to ‘the privy and the cesspool or the drains proceeding from them’.¹⁸ Even a medical expert as famous as Sir John Simon (first MOH for the city of London) had once believed that typhoid was spread by ‘sewer atmosphere’, although shortly before 1875 he had come to accept that a more likely cause was ‘molecules of excrement’ and ‘microscopical forms’, as the new germ theory gained acceptance.¹⁹ The *Lancet* seems to have been similarly uncertain. It reported several cases among men exposed to sewer gas,²⁰ in one of a dozen or so editorials and papers on typhoid which it printed during a sixth month period in 1875.

Perhaps the most revealing glimpse of the still uncertain contemporary state of knowledge can be found in the first edition of the book by Rugby School doctor

¹⁷ Pelling, Margaret: *Cholera, Fever and English Medicine 1825-65* (1978) pp. 59-60.

¹⁸ Budd, William: *Typhoid* p. 146.

¹⁹ Wohl: *Endangered Lives* p. 89.

²⁰ *Lancet* 28 August 1875.

Clement Dukes, writing a decade later. While he states that ‘in this school ‘filth diseases’ such as diphtheria and typhoid, depending mostly upon unsanitary conditions of life, such as impure water have been all but exterminated’, he raises ‘a wider question... whether all infectious diseases are the result of bacteria’.²¹ He also cites three views on the origins of infection or contagion current at the time: firstly, particles of animal origin, born and growing in the body, secondly, particles of fungoid nature, growing in the body but induced from without, and thirdly:

Particles of contagia [which] are of the nature of the Schizomyceles – i.e. the members of the lowest stratum at present known in the animate world. They are commonly called bacteria, bacilli, microzymes, vibrios, spirilla, monads...²²

This lack of precise knowledge explains the bitter disagreements between Bell and Haviland. Meanwhile both the Registrar General’s annual reports and the findings of Haviland himself²³ suggested that the town of Uppingham was better than many communities of its type in terms of general disease incidence and fever itself.

2) EPIDEMICS AND NINETEENTH CENTURY BOARDING SCHOOLS

The school had suffered no *major* epidemic in Thring’s time, although chapter 4 shows that he had expressed a growing concern about scarlet fever and its possible causes.²⁴ It had, however, experienced one recent outbreak of potentially serious disease – from diphtheria, in May 1861. This was small in scale, but had resulted in

²¹ Dukes, Clement: *Health at School Considered in its Mental, Moral and Physical Aspects* (1887) p. 267.

²² Ibid pp. 264-265, ascribed to Dr. Parkes.

²³ See ch. 3 section 6.

²⁴ See ch. 4 section 3.

the deaths of two pupils who had been nursed at school, while others who had been sent home survived.²⁵ Other boarding schools had suffered far more.²⁶

Measures to counter disease in schools were generally reactive rather than proactive, as concentrations of young people were at risk from a variety of epidemic diseases, including scarlet fever, diphtheria, measles, whooping cough and tuberculosis.

Waterborne infections such as cholera and typhoid could also spread rapidly.²⁷ An editorial in the *Medical Officer* in 1938 states:

Readers of Tom Brown's School Days will remember the description of the illness of Tom's friend, which was clearly enteric. Dr Arnold's published letters show how constantly there was present before him the spectre of sickness and death of his pupils and his great anxiety when cholera made its appearance in the Midlands.²⁸

Arnold invited sixth form reading parties to his house in the Lake District in the holidays to refresh their health, believing that the mountains and dales were 'a great point in education'.²⁹ He had good cause to do so; cholera in Rugby caused the dispersal of his pupils in 1832 and 1841.³⁰

The nineteenth century brought a major growth in boarding school numbers, and living conditions were often more overcrowded and spartan than in Thring's

²⁵ *Times* 5 December 1878 : 'In the cottage sanatorium', according to a letter in the paper from 'A'.

²⁶ Honey, JR de S: *Tom Brown's Universe: The Development of the Victorian Public School* (1977) p. 164.

²⁷ Mingay GE: *The Victorian Countryside* (1981) Vol. 2 p. 525.

²⁸ *Medical Officer* 28 May 1938 p. 224.

²⁹ McCrum, Michael: *Thomas Arnold: Head Master - A Reassessment* (Oxford, 1989) p. 37.

³⁰ Honey: *Tom Brown* p. 164.

Uppingham. In the 1830s 70 boys were locked in Long Chamber at Eton between 8pm and the following morning (as Thring himself could testify); there was no piped water and no basins, with washing done under a pump in the yard. Complaints about colds and sore throats abounded.³¹ Eton built a sanatorium in 1844. Rugby followed suit in the early 1850s - with reason, as piggeries, kennels and stables were part of everyday life. After the annual fair, the accumulated filth in the streets took over a week to remove:

Each fetid court of beaten earth... contained a pump for drinking water, a drain which often took the overflow from a cesspool, and a small enclosure surrounded by a low brick wall for more solid filth... the value of the eight wide roads that radiated from the town in providing constant through winds was lessened by the ditches that ran alongside them. In these ditches the sewage from the town was collected and spread as manure upon the undrained fields 'little better than a morass'. From ditches and cesspools the sewage of the town seeped into the drift gravels... Held in this gravel subsoil, 'the receptacle for the chief fluid filth of the town', the water was drawn up from wells about twelve feet deep. This the inhabitants drank.³²

Conditions inside some of the schools themselves were little better. At Westminster (whose reputation had already suffered over a long period after Dean Buckland opened the drains for examination in the late 1840s)³³ cubicles were put up in the 1860s in 'dormitory', but the rats were so numerous that they ate the surplices and

³¹ Medical Research Council report: *Epidemics in Schools: An Analysis of the Data collected during the First Five Years of a Statistical Inquiry by the School Epidemics Committee*, HMSO 1938 pp. 20-1.

³² Simms, TH: *The Rise of a Midland Town: Rugby, 1800-1900* (Rugby, 1949) pp 5-7.

³³ Burgess, GHO: *The Curious World of Frank Buckland* (1967) p. 57.

braces as well as the food. Privies were still extremely basic, with their contents at Winchester in 1875 ‘passing into a stream, called “Little Brook”, which passes as a sewer in front of the college gate and receives half the town sewerage, which is abominable’.³⁴ Epsom College was criticised in the *Lancet* in the same year for having ‘drainage until recently into large cesspits, found to be very unsatisfactory. Present system improperly ventilated. Water supply inadequate; not a constant supply’.³⁵

Many years later, a committee of the Medical Research Council (1929-38) enquired into the prevalence and mode of spread of epidemics in residential schools spanning several centuries, and the growth in numbers of medical officers and sanatoria which they had recently acquired. Not surprisingly, it concluded that the illnesses had been many and varied, and chronicling them and the temporary closures of better-known schools which had resulted from them. Typhoid was by no means the most prevalent – although Lancing was struck by it in 1886. However, whereas the Uppingham outbreak was almost certainly due to foul water, Lancing’s resulted from food: infected cream from a local dairy had been served at a summer cricket match against its former pupils.³⁶

The most frequent diseases included smallpox (especially before 1850) and influenza, but there were others. Christ’s Hospital suffered major bouts of ringworm in the 1830s; even sending the boys home failed to effect a cure, resulting in a vigorous campaign in the *Lancet* for better food and medical facilities. Charterhouse suffered a

³⁴ MRC: *Epidemics* p. 20. However, it contrasts Winchester’s failings with the excellent attention to sanitary detail at Shrewsbury (p. 25).

³⁵ Ibid p. 41.

³⁶ Honey: *Tom Brown* p. 164, based on *Lancing Register* 1848-1912 (1913) p. xxxi. There are many references in the MRC Report to poor food in schools – see especially pp. 20-23.

mumps epidemic in the 1860s; there was measles at Marlborough in 1846 and 1848 (which led to the college being closed). Between 1852 and 1870 Marlborough also suffered 26 deaths: 8 from pneumonia, 3 from meningitis, 4 from acute rheumatism, and 2 from appendicitis.³⁷ At Radley influenza and fever caused occasional fatalities.³⁸ Haileybury, founded in 1862, built its sanatorium only four years later; and early in-patients included victims of smallpox, typhoid and scarlet fever (23 cases in 1871 and 16 in 1873).³⁹

In scarlet fever Haileybury had experienced one of the two particular epidemic scourges of boarding schools. It was nationally prevalent in this period;⁴⁰ the average annual death rate in England and Wales from it (per 1000 persons living) rose from 0.83 in the decade 1851-60 to a peak of 0.97 in 1861-70, before falling back to 0.16 by 1900. 1864, 1870 and 1874 were the worst years.⁴¹ Creighton's *History of Epidemics in Britain* (1894) describes 'the enormous number of deaths [from the disease] during some 30 or 40 years in the middle of the nineteenth century [as] one of the most remarkable things in our epidemiology'.⁴²

The schools could not escape this disease. It was rife in Eton in the 1840s – and at Winchester, where boys had been dispersed because of it in 1843. 'Terrible illness' struck the school again a year later, and 'half the inmates were prostrated' in 1846.⁴³

³⁷ MRC: *Epidemics* .p 34.

³⁸ Ibid p. 41.

³⁹ Ibid p. 39.

⁴⁰ Honey: Tom Brown p. 165: the return of diphtheria baffled the medical profession, many of whom had not previously experienced it. See also Creighton, C: *History of Epidemics in Britain* (Cambridge, 1894) Vol. 2 pp. 723-6.

⁴¹ Honey: Tom Brown p. 165.

⁴² Creighton: *History of Epidemics* p. 723.

⁴³ MRC: *Epidemics* p. 18.

Two sons of headmaster Moberley died there in 1858 and 1871.⁴⁴ Harrovians were sent home twice in the 1860s after it broke out (along with other mysterious rashes which the doctors could not account for.⁴⁵ Cranleigh was hit in 1863 within a year of its opening.⁴⁶ Radley boys were sent home in 1865,⁴⁷ and Marlborough suffered nine fatalities between 1858 and 1870⁴⁸ - the latter being an epidemic which left only 150 boys at school during its peak. Wellington suffered three fatalities in the same year, and more in 1872 (as well as periodic septicaemia). Rossall, founded in 1884, suffered three deaths only six months after it opened.⁴⁹

The coming of autumn each year posed a special threat: the Rugby doctor reported in the educational press in November 1888 that ‘during the last three weeks no fewer than eleven southern schools have broken up... owing to epidemics of scarlet fever’.⁵⁰ Even in 1896 it was a formidable disease, with a minimum of six weeks’ confinement, with isolation in a room with a sheet steeped in carbolic over the door, and almost no visitors.⁵¹

Diphtheria was the other major threat. Uppingham’s experience of it in 1861 was comparatively minor. Charterhouse suffered nine cases in 1886:

put in the same house, and on the same floor, as healthy boys... due to the

⁴⁴ Moberly, CAE, (ed): *George Moberly’s Journal 1849* (1916) p. 75.

⁴⁵ MRC: *Epidemics* p. 25. There was no sanatorium until 1868, and all patients were nursed in the housemaster’s private wing.

⁴⁶ Honey: *Tom Brown* p. 164.

⁴⁷ MRC: *Epidemics* p. 41.

⁴⁸ Ibid p. 35.

⁴⁹ See Bennett, Peter: *A Very Desolate Position* (Rossall School, 1977).

⁵⁰ *Private Schoolmaster* 15 November 1887: article by Clement Dukes.

⁵¹ Irvine, AL: *Sixty Years at School* (Winchester, 1958) pp. 20-21. The victim in one such case, a Winchester boy, had contracted the disease twice in one year at school.

action of a housemaster and in spite of the opinion of the school doctor,⁵²
who had urged removal to the sanatorium of each patient and strongly
against the general exeat.⁵³

Haileybury suffered two deaths in 1888, and many similar symptoms appeared
between 1896 and 1906, resulting in seventeen boys leaving the school in one year.⁵⁴
Only with better drainage did the problem disappear. Fettes suffered in the same way,
and was temporarily evacuated to Windermere in 1883.⁵⁵ Radley suffered one fatality
in 1894.⁵⁶

Wellington's diphtheria problems were the most acute. Its 1883 outbreak resulted in
complete drainage modernisation, but this failed to prevent 'the cataclysm of 1891' –
an outbreak which led to 41 boys being admitted to the sanatorium in November, two
fatalities, a crisis of confidence amongst parents and (following Thring's example)
temporary removal to the Imperial hotel at Malvern for a term.⁵⁷

Prep schools (many of which had been set up in healthy areas by private owners who
realised the vulnerability of boys to infectious disease)⁵⁸ were similarly afflicted.

Eagle House suffered both scarlet fever and diphtheria in the 1850s, and Twyford
suffered two deaths from the latter in 1896 before the school was evacuated to

⁵² MRC: *Epidemics* p. 33.

⁵³ i.e. allowing pupils to go home once it broke out.

⁵⁴ MRC: *Epidemics* p. 39.

⁵⁵ Pyatt, HR: *Fifty Years of Fettes* (1931) pp. 93-100.

⁵⁶ MRC: *Epidemics* p. 41.

⁵⁷ Newsome, David: *A History of Wellington College* (1959) pp. 215-219. 32 boys were withdrawn.
The subsequent improvements were supervised by Rogers Field see p 371.

⁵⁸ Leinster-Mackay, Donald. *The Rise of the English Prep School* (1984) p. 122.

Winchester.⁵⁹ Summer Fields (Oxford) was hit by severe influenza in 1898 and the nearby Dragon school by measles in the same year.⁶⁰

The Public Schools commission, appointed in 1864, had made little reference to health, although it concluded that in general schools had kept up with the domestic and sanitary advances of recent decades and that 'hardy exercise' helped to keep sickness at bay. At St Paul's however, it noted 'a great decline in the boys' health, due to overwork, fatigue, London born and bred, i.e. a delicate stock, and insufficient games and exercise'.⁶¹

In the Public Schools Act of 1868 there was only a single paragraph allowing governing bodies to make regulations about the sanitation of schools. The *Lancet* continued its century-long campaign for better conditions in such schools, forming commissions of enquiry in 1861 and again in 1875 on its own initiative.⁶² These called for better hygiene and food in schools, for more comprehensive record-keeping, for parents to give notification of diseases suffered at home, and for medical examination of pupils on their return to school. The second commission, on the eve of the Uppingham typhoid outbreak, praised the new sanatoria and new water closets in some schools, but criticised poor ventilation and lighting, trapped drains and the leakage of sewer gas from town mains. It urged the appointment of MOs in all boarding schools.

⁵⁹ Leinster-Mackay: *Prep School* pp. 123-124.

⁶⁰ Ibid p. 125.

⁶¹ MRC: *Epidemics* p. 27.

⁶² Ibid p. 27.

As the Uppingham crisis developed, Thring observed that although Rugby had once dispersed itself into reading parties in houses all over the Lake District,⁶³ no similar school had ever considered migrating en masse to a single place.⁶⁴ We do not know whether, as he did so, he was aware that the governors of Rugby (who had been considering increasing the boarding numbers at the start of Jex-Blake's headmastership) had recently commissioned the local MOH to recommend improvements to boarding house sanitation and water supply. The housemasters there had to be persuaded to comply, but it is likely that within months, events in Uppingham forced them to recognise the wisdom of the instruction.⁶⁵

Throughout the period, some headmasters were concerned about sanitary reform, and many were intent on getting nuisances removed as far from their school as possible. AC Tait, successor to Arnold at Rugby, campaigned strenuously for improvements there, only (in 1856, after he had left⁶⁶), to lose five of his own children to scarlet fever within five weeks.

Could other headmasters have been more proactive? When a school's popularity waned, attacking the local authorities over faulty drainage could be a convenient diversionary tactic (as practised by Moberly at Winchester).⁶⁷ But some were as reluctant as the local ratepayers to become involved. As TW Bamford explains,

⁶³ Bamford: *Rise of the Public Schools* p. 205. It took place in 1841: some went to Churchover and Leamington instead.

⁶⁴ GR Parkin (ed): *Edward Thring, Headmaster of Uppingham School: Life, diary and letters* (1898) Vol. 2 p. 36: 3 March 1876.

⁶⁵ Hope Simpson, JB: *Rugby since Arnold* (1967) p. 10.

⁶⁶ By then he was Dean of Carlisle.

⁶⁷ Bamford: *Rise of the Public Schools* p. 204. The school was hit by epidemics in 1846, 1848 and 1861.

‘headmasters, like all men who have reform thrust upon them, ignored the problem as long as they could’.⁶⁸

Significantly, the Wellington College MO, Dr Barford, had complained for twenty years before the 1891 diphtheria crisis about the state of its drains, but had been dismissed by the governing body for suggesting that £20,000 was needed to put things right – following which he carried on an independent campaign in the newspapers and the *Lancet*.⁶⁹ The 1930s MRC Report may have had Dr Barford in mind when it concluded that the role of the school doctor had become one of critical importance, and praised the role of the medical press in highlighting neglect or complacency.⁷⁰

Meanwhile, back in 1887, Clement Dukes, the M.O. at Rugby⁷¹ wrote:

I have seen cesspools at one of the most popular and expensive schools in the kingdom in such a state of repletion that it would be impossible for the boys to use them without defiling themselves with the decomposing ordure. I may add that I saw this condition, on the occasion I refer to, on the last day of the vacation, and the state of things had existed probably since the end of the previous term.⁷²

Despite the fact that the ideas of contagion and (to a lesser extent) infection, circulated widely among the parent clientele of such schools,⁷³ large numbers of them

⁶⁸ Ibid p. 204.

⁶⁹ Ibid p. 208.

⁷⁰ MRC: *Epidemics* p. 42.

⁷¹ See ch 5, section 7, and its footnotes 91 and 93.

⁷² Dukes, Clement: *Health at School* (1887) p. 63. See also ch. 5 section 7

⁷³ Browne, GF: *Recollections of a Bishop* (1915) p. 56.

were prepared to accept the increased risks of sending their sons away to school rather than keeping them at home, despite the knowledge that the schools had limited facilities, if any, for dealing with serious and epidemic illness. Indeed, in the middle of the century, the reaction of headmasters tended to be to send sick boys home.⁷⁴

Glenalmond's headmaster stated in 1858: 'I will *not* have boys die here'.⁷⁵

It is against this background that the Uppingham epidemic, and the actions of its leading personalities, need to be judged. While public expectations about public health were rising faster than the public's acceptance of rate increases to pay for improvements, the underlying causes of epidemic diseases such as typhoid remained uncertain. Medical knowledge gained in London and elsewhere filtered down only slowly to rural areas.

⁷⁴ Honey: *Tom Brown* p. 166.

⁷⁵ Browne: *Recollections* p. 55.

APPENDIX 5 – BORTH: MARCH 1876 – MARCH 1877

1) INTRODUCTION

Much of the material in this appendix is drawn from a small book by one of the masters who experienced the move to Borth and who was also one of Thring's former pupils – John Skrine. *Uppingham by the Sea* was published by Macmillan in 1878. Its brief narrative has been supplemented by numerous newspaper entries in the *Cambrian News* and the *Aberystwyth Journal*; the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth also holds a number of secondary books describing life in Cardiganshire at that time. Events and personalities in Borth are comprehensively detailed in the *USM*; they show how both staff and pupils viewed the unusual events that they were experiencing.

JH Skrine's lively if somewhat over-romanticised account of the school's time at Borth was published in 1878 soon after the school returned to Uppingham. In it he paints a faithful picture of a great adventure in which, having brilliantly improvised the living and teaching arrangements, staff and pupils worked cheerfully and purposefully together. While this description has much truth in it, it glosses over the hardships and practical difficulties, and understates the disagreements and less optimistic moments, especially in later stages. Life at Borth must have been particularly hard for housemasters and their young, uprooted families.

2) JOURNEY INTO THE UNKNOWN?

Chapter 6, section 3 explains how Thring and the housemasters gradually came to the view in the spring of 1876 that the school had to be removed from Uppingham until it could be sure of both safe sanitation and sound water. The reference in his diary on 13

March 1876 to Borth as being somewhere in ‘North Wales’¹ suggests that Thring was far from sure about precisely where it was situated. It is unlikely that he would have ever visited such a place in other circumstances – although he would develop a great affection for it by living there.

The extent of his desperation at the situation in Uppingham, and his powers of imagination, improvisation and boldness can only be appreciated by some knowledge of the nature of Borth and its area at the time. Such information also helps to explain why the town and its RSA (which must have slowly become aware that the idea was gaining currency) almost certainly reckoned that Thring would never actually carry it out.

Within hours of the boys departing, Thring, Haslam and Bagshawe journeyed north to Chester by train, where they met Jacob (for whom it was only a short distance from Liverpool) and were joined by Cobb, fresh from his preliminary reconnaissance of various locations in Wales. First they ruled out Llandrindod Wells, deep in rural mid Wales: ‘the bleak moors round it were uninviting enough that March day... there was no sufficient house-room in the place’.² From there they journeyed to Borth, a few miles north of Aberystwyth on the mid-Wales coast, where they arrived during gale-force winds. The presence of one huge building, the empty Cambrian hotel with its many bedrooms, offered them many possibilities. Thring was exhilarated by it all: (March 16th):

¹ See ch. 6 section 3, and Parkin, GR. (ed): *Edward Thring, Headmaster of Uppingham School: Life, Diary and Letters* (1898) Vol. 2 pp. 40-44.

² Skrine, JH: *Uppingham by the Sea* (1878) p. 10.

Altogether I feel we are as we could be... the sea is so beautiful, so is the view on the hillside at the back, and there is plenty of space. The water and drainage are exceptionally good.... So now we have only to work hard this next fortnight and get all things ready, and then may a blessing rest on Uppingham by the Sea.³

He arranged lodgings for his family for three weeks, bade farewell to most of the others in Aberystwyth and headed back by train to Shrewsbury, and thence to Uppingham. He had a great deal to do in a very short time.

Before making his decision, however, and mindful of Dr Bell's sensitivities about his role and territory as school doctor, Thring had summoned Bell to go with him on a flying visit to Borth, to approve it as medically suitable.⁴ Borth had many snags as the location for a large boarding school, but it is unlikely that either Thring or Bell could have fully grasped the extent of them on their brief visits before the final decision was reached to relocate the School there.

Borth suffered all the extremes of atlantic weather, especially in winter – but at this stage Thring envisaged being there only for the summer term. Despite the arrival of the railway in 1863, built in stages from Machynlleth to Aberystwyth by a group of entrepreneurs who had high hopes of the area's tourist potential, it was still a distinctly basic community in its facilities – which explain why not only the hotel but also many of the lodging houses nearby were available to the school.

³ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 45: Thring to Birley 16 March 1876.

⁴ Skrine: *Uppingham by the Sea* p. 11.

Borth was far less developed economically than Uppingham. In 1876 the village boasted (besides its railway station), a nearly-completed church, and a number of cottages along its single main street – mostly occupied by peat-cutters and fishermen. Its sanitary arrangements seem likely not to have been as advanced as Uppingham's either. Because it was on the atlantic coast, Thring probably guessed that it was rudely healthy. But, while its incidence of typhoid cases appears to have been low,⁵ he was probably unaware of the four cholera epidemics in the area between 1832 and 1866,⁶ or of the very high incidence of tuberculosis which dogged the area well into the twentieth century (partly because houses were damp and few had damp courses). Jenkins and Jones' *Cardiganshire County History* records:

During successive decades before the second world war, Cardiganshire had an unenviable reputation (the fourth highest among all counties in England and Wales) for high infant mortality, deaths of mothers in childbirth, rotten teeth, hearing defects, blindness, imbecility and madness...⁷

The county had also suffered a severe scarlet fever outbreak in 1872 (just like Uppingham) with 100 deaths that year and another 56 in 1873.⁸

Nearby Aberystwyth was larger and more developed than Borth. By 1876 it had experienced a population growth of nearly 50% in 25 years.⁹ Because of this new-found popularity (and an influx in the holiday season) there had been a building boom

⁵ The Registrar General's Annual Reports list between 2 and 6 cases per year between 1872 and 1876, in the Aberystwyth registration district which had a population twice the size of Uppingham.

⁶ NLW: May, John: *Reference Wales* (1994) p. 118.

⁷ Jenkins, GH, and Jones, IG: *Cardiganshire County History* Vol. 3 (Cardiff, 1988) pp. 437-440 - confirmed in conversation with Helen Palmer at Ceredigion Archives, 2002.

⁸ Information from Registrar General's Annual Reports.

⁹ Lewis, WJ: *Born on a Perilous Rock: Aberystwyth Past and Present* (1980) p. 123.

which had resulted in its public services becoming stretched to breaking point. But despite being the largest community for miles around, it had only very limited hospital facilities - barely a dozen beds - before the mid 1880s.¹⁰ Refuse collection was at best haphazard. Sewerage provision was very patchy before the great flood of 1886. This would lead to a sewage farm of sorts, but there was no system serving the whole town until the 1920s.¹¹

Borth also had severe problems with an inadequate water supply. There were standpipes in most streets until at least the 1870s, and the reservoirs were so inadequate that water could be obtained for only about 2 hours per day at the height of the season, despite local petitions for improvements. We know from the *Aberystwyth Observer* that for much of the year 1876-7,¹² a fierce debate was going on within the town council about the need for a better water supply and the best means of obtaining it. Increasing population was putting pressure on local facilities here as well as back in Rutland.

However, if Aberystwyth had its limitations, it was far ahead of Borth.¹³ Borth did not even have a doctor, although the 1871 census lists amongst its inhabitants one nurse. The construction of the railway in 1863 had - it was alleged - cut into a good spring, which had subsequently been piped to bring a limited water supply to the Cambrian Hotel, the houses next to it in Cambrian Terrace and to the station beyond, but the pipes were narrow in the first place and inclined to fur up.¹⁴ There had been demands for at least two more street taps to be provided from the main pump, but nothing had

¹⁰ Ibid p. 155.

¹¹ Ibid pp. 23-27.

¹² *Aberystwyth Observer* 23 September 1876.

¹³ Green, CC: *The Coast Lines of the Cambrian Railways* (Didcot, 1993) p. 130.

¹⁴ Ibid p.132.

been done. The rest of the village would have no mains water supply for another thirty years. Not surprisingly, in Borth as in Uppingham and in many towns and villages at the time, the local ratepayers were very reluctant to pay for improvements themselves; they expected the Cambrian Railway company to provide them.

There was already much talk about inconvenience and foul smells in Borth during the summer months. Less than a year before, the inspector of nuisances had complained to its RSA about the accumulation of stagnant water in drainage ditches around the railway, claiming that ‘the climate of Borth is considerably damaged by such sources of dampness and malaria’. Furthermore, the LGB expressed concern over the lack of an analyst of food and drugs in the area throughout 1876 before an appointment was finally made.¹⁵

Whether or not he knew any of these likely problems, Thring threw the full responsibility for the School’s safety and sound health at Borth on to his recently-recruited sanitary officer, Dr Christopher Childs. He would also take Dr Bell’s title of medical officer for the period of the school’s stay there.

Limited local services were about to have a suddenly increased demand imposed on them. Uppingham’s community of over 400 (staff and families as well as pupils) would more than double its population. The census of 1871 shows that in Borth itself there were 142 people in 36 family households.¹⁶ In addition, there would be a

¹⁵ PRO/TNA MH30/20: Cardigan Poor Law Correspondence Jan 1876 and Jan 1877. A similar issue arose in Rutland and was dealt with much more rapidly – see TNA MH30/209.

¹⁶ These were in addition to the string of villages and houses stretching up the valley and classified as Morfa Borth, which contained between 500 and 600 people, drawn from farming and a variety of other trades). 51 of these 142 were under 21, but only 26 were aged 15 to 40, which suggests that young people tended to leave the area in search of work. See also CA: Borth burial list: this

significant language difficulty. Borth was deep in the heart of welsh-speaking Wales. Even allowing for the passing of time, the fact that comparatively few records and artefacts seem to have remained in the area after the School left suggests that the cross-over of school and locals was comparatively limited. The school brought its own 'servants' with the masters.

Uppingham parents would have had little or no knowledge of the potential hazards – which was just as well from Thring's point of view. Even so, and even if they trusted and respected him personally, would they actually support him and his staff by sending their sons off to a place of which they had probably never heard? At a time when boarding schools were expanding all over the country, they had plenty of choice if they sought an alternative school.

Whether or not Thring harboured any doubts on these issues, he had moved beyond indecision, possibly buoyed by his sense of predestination about his Uppingham project over the previous twenty-five years. He can have had very little time to pack up essential papers and belongings; he was back in Borth again after an absence of only a few days. 'Tomorrow begins real hard work, but liberty', he declared (March 26th).¹⁷ But it is likely that the move caused considerable anguish and stress for the masters – and for Thring himself. On a personal level there were wives and families to uproot from home and friends, and servants to leave behind or bring with them. The Thrings had five children; the Campbells had daughters of 17, 15, 11 and 9, and sons

migration might possibly be confirmed by the burial records for Borth in this period, which shows nearly all burials being of those who were either very young or over 60 (although these groups would, of course, tend to be those most at risk anyway).

¹⁷ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 46: Thring's diary 26 March 1876.

of 13 and 6.¹⁸ Professionally, leaving behind all the buildings and the school which they had built up over 25 years cannot have been easy - nor can the separation from familiar surroundings, furniture and many personal effects.

It could be argued that, medically speaking, Thring's naivety about the true state of Borth casts doubts on his ability to make sound judgements during the events of the previous autumn in Uppingham.¹⁹ But the die was now cast.

3) SUMMER TERM 1876

On his arrival Thring directed the setting-up work at Borth like a military operation, establishing the school in the Cambrian hotel and in more than two dozen lodging houses up and down the main street. Rooms were allocated to staff and pupils, local workmen were recruited to adapt the buildings and to set up extra lavatory and washing facilities, and trestle tables were acquired to feed all 300 pupils within the hotel. The stables were hastily converted into the school carpentry shop, and the coach house into a rudimentary gymnasium; as much as possible of the innovative Uppingham curriculum was to be preserved. Work also began on the construction of a large wooden schoolroom – 83 feet by 20 – on a patch of ground behind the hotel which would serve as a schoolroom-cum-assembly hall. Other buildings had to be found for music practice and for a standby sanatorium.

A specially chartered goods train brought equipment from Uppingham, arriving on March 27th. Its most striking item of equipment was the cricket roller - unloaded at

¹⁸ CA: Cyforeth y Brenin Census 1871.

¹⁹ Point made in conversation by Dr Elizabeth Hurren.

Bow Street station, four miles further down the line towards Aberystwyth. Initially it seemed destined to be redundant; the earlier inspection of possible sites in Borth itself had yielded only a piece of moderately uneven ground, big enough for five or six nets. But Thring received the offer of a cricket field from Sir Pryse Pryse of Gogerddan (a few miles away) at a nominal rent. He was to strike up a good friendship with this enthusiastic and generous, if highly eccentric, old Etonian.

Within a week of most of the staff arriving, nearly everything was ready. In the final days of March Thring wrote to his brother Henry: 'Things are falling into place better than I dared hope... I could almost write an inventory of Borth lodging houses, rooms and prices from memory'.²⁰ If his housemasters had doubts – or dared to wonder how many of their pupils would turn up for the start of the new term in such unfamiliar surroundings, their forebodings were dispelled by the arrival of the boys by train on March 4th. Only three or four failed to arrive; 33 new pupils had joined in January and another 17 arrived for the summer term²¹ – proof that, despite recent criticisms, Thring enjoyed a strong personal following among parents.

He now faced a new set of challenges. He had to manage a large school in a very small community; it would attract a great deal of curious attention and the behaviour of its pupils would be carefully watched and noticed. The school can hardly have been inconspicuous, because of its numbers and the contrast with the limited educational facilities available to villagers (for whom full-time education was compulsory only to the age of 11).²² He had always laid much emphasis on the 'Almighty wall' and

²⁰ Parkin: *Thring*: Vol. 2 p. 47: Thring to Sir Henry Thring 31 March 1876.

²¹ *USR* (sixth issue, 1932).

²² Jenkins and Jones: *Cardiganshire History* p. 435.

‘Machinery’ – high-quality facilities and smooth organisation. The first was now far away, and the second would have to be improvised.

There were inevitable teething problems. Pressure on space in the hotel meant that a number of extra rooms in local cottages had to be hired as studies; up to six boys shared a small room with one fireplace and one table. Despite the kindness of these landladies, many of them ‘poor widows’ in a hazardous seafaring community, the boys keenly missed the privacy of their partitioned dormitories and studies back at school, prompting one wag to suggest:

Let two hundred bathing machines be brought together from Llandudno and other watering-places within reach, and ranged along the beach. Let one machine be assigned to each boy, and let them be filled up with book-shelves, tables chairs etc. Thus the whole difficulty will be solved in a moment. And the plan has this further advantage, that when the time comes for returning to Uppingham, the bathing-machines would simply be formed in line, and driven across the country to Rutlandshire, and all further trouble in the way of furniture-vans and families-removing be cut away at one stroke.²³

Clearly no-one expected to be there for more than that single summer term.

Although the catering worked well, it proved hard to get local farmers to provide butter and green vegetables, or any meat alternative to Welsh mutton. A correspondent wrote to the *USM* signing himself *Convolutio Tepefacta*, calling for

²³ *USM* Summer 1876.

Baines or Love (the two Uppingham bakers) to be sent over to make hot rolls in the morning, as the only Borth baker lived five miles away and came over to the village only twice a week.²⁴ The weather was seasonably variable, 'especially for boys not used to the west coast' as Skrine observed on April 13th, 'the East winds and the coal arrived together'. There were occasional misunderstandings between boys and local people. The school library was greatly missed.

With distances of over a mile between the hotel and schoolroom and the outlying cottages, times and timekeeping proved difficult. Lessons tended to begin late – at least, until a flagstaff was put up in front of the hotel, to call pupils to lessons from all over the village by raising a flag.²⁵

Yet Thring also felt that Borth offered great opportunities, for both staff and pupils. As he addressed the whole pupil body on that first day, he spoke of a great experiment in which they were sharing; let them do their best to make the result a happy one for themselves and for the people among whom they had come. They were 'making history'.²⁶ New interests were grasped with enthusiasm - walking and bird-watching, and the collecting of shells from the beach, which also became a place for exercise. Excursions went off to climb Cader Idris and to visit Devil's Bridge. Shooting took place on the land of friendly neighbours. Science and archaeology expeditions were organized, and an aquarium flourished for a while.

²⁴ *USM* Summer 1876.

²⁵ There is, however, no evidence that academic standards suffered to any degree: the honours lists in the Old School Room in Uppingham show 25 entrance and other exhibitions in 1876 and 19 in 1877 – an unusually large number.

²⁶ Skrine, JH: *Uppingham by the Sea* (1878) pp. 22-23. See also Skrine, JH: *A Memory of Edward Thring* (1890) p. 184.

Normal routines carried on wherever possible, with house football finals, held over from the end of the previous term, watched by a large number of spectators who travelled there by train at specially reduced fares, and joined by curious local children. There were athletics afternoons.²⁷ A large number of the school turned out to follow the local hounds. The choir performed Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*, held over from the previous winter, but no Christmas tree could be found for the occasion, and the acoustics in the wooden building proved very poor. The Old Boys' cricket match took place in July. There was the occasional drama, too. A new boy, brought over by his father from Ireland, wandered off (possibly suffering from homesickness), and search parties, including police, were sent out. He slept rough over a Saturday night and was then found in the company of a farm labourer next day.²⁸

The school was careful to cultivate local people and the local press. A stream of news items from 'A correspondent' was sent to both local papers, the *Cambrian News* and the *Aberystwyth Observer*, some of it with a distinctly good-public-relations flavour. The *Aberystwyth Observer* reported (March 12th): 'The school enjoys Borth very much...most of the boys confess that Borth is the best place they have ever visited'. A letter from a local inhabitant praised the boys' behaviour thus far and pointed out what they might learn about the world of nature from their stay.²⁹ Not every pupil found life at Borth wholly agreeable; there was a gentle running satire in the School magazine through the year, poking fun at its remoteness and insularity.³⁰ The choir

²⁷ *Cambrian News* 21 April 1876.

²⁸ *Cambrian News* 19 May 1876. His name is not recorded.

²⁹ *Aberystwyth Observer* 6 May 1876.

³⁰ *USM* Summer 1876: for example, 'A Play' in several scenes about Borth life.

sang at the first service in the newly-completed church - and Thring preached the first sermon in it, on Trinity Sunday.³¹

There is no doubt that Thring himself greatly enjoyed much of that summer term. 'It is curious how the venom diminishes with the miles', he wrote in his diary (May 28th),³² 'we have now been half our time here; what a blessing!' On June 13th he wrote in another letter: 'I feel a sense of freedom I have long been strange to in being away from the choking atmosphere of Rutland and its narrow and petty antagonisms'.³³ A month later, describing a visit to Sir Pryse Pryse's splendid gardens, he observed:

He certainly is the most genial fellow I ever saw. The pleasant surroundings here of friendly people and glorious country do make this life with all its troubles and deadly chances at the moment often enjoyable, sometimes really delightful, and I feel healthy and strong.³⁴

Chapter 7, sections 5-7 describe all the financial and other pressures on Thring towards the end of that term, as he awaited the trustees' decision on whether to order the school to return to Uppingham in September, and as he struggled to keep unity amongst the masters – and the eventual acceptance amongst all parties that the school would have to return to Borth in the autumn. On the night before the summer term ended the Borth inhabitants decorated the streets with flags and streamers bearing the

³¹ Thring, Edward: *Collected Sermons* (Cambridge, 1886) Vol. 1 p. 281.

³² Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 56: Thring's diary 28 May 1876.

³³ UA: Letter to AH Boucher 13 June 1876.

³⁴ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 58: Thring's diary 26 June 1876.

words *Au revoir*. They seem not to have been too sorry at the prospect of the School's return; for many of the traders, Uppingham's loss was, literally, Borth's gain.

4) AUTUMN TERM 1876

It was one thing to move the School to the atlantic coast for three months at the start of summer, but quite another to think of returning there as winter set in. Thring was uncomfortably aware that winter winds and cold might well show up just how basic some of the lodging houses were. Anticipating the worst, storm precautions were taken – including the walling-up of the porch of the hotel with planks.

Thirty-three pupils had left at the end of the summer term, but Thring recorded ten days later that 'the entries exceed the leavings by one – a refutation to the prophets of evil'.³⁵ There was an increasing proportion of boys now who had never known the 'real school'.³⁶ By the time the school eventually returned to Uppingham, no fewer than sixty-six boys – almost one-fifth of the total - would be at school there for the first time.

Pupils faced the new autumn term with rather less enthusiasm than in the heady days of April. The days shortened and the weather closed in; it was essential to find new amusements and diversions. There were no fives courts and no ground for playing hockey, but football could be played. Sir Pryse Pryse sent his harriers over to Borth to hunt twice a week now, and the boys ran with the hunt and with hare-coursers. With dusk creeping ever earlier a programme of lectures by outside speakers began. For the

³⁵ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 62: Thring's diary 25 September 1876.

³⁶ *Cambrian News*, 17 November 1978: Retrospective article by *Will o the whispers*.

adults, it remained important to keep in touch with the local Borth community. Thring preached the sermon at the harvest thanksgiving in the new church.³⁷

With afternoon school now shifted to the hour of sunset (i.e. games took place before the final lessons of the day), so that the dark hours did not hang as heavily as they might have done, but even Skrine admitted in retrospect that pupil discipline was becoming a little ragged, and that there was some 'bullying and mischief'.³⁸ Things were no easier for the adults, as the full force of winter began to be felt. Rawnsley (another housemaster) wrote: 'We learned what the wind on the west coast could be. In our houses, when the street door was opened, the carpets blew up in every room'.³⁹

Towards the middle of the term it became increasingly clear that Uppingham might not be ready for the return of the school after Christmas. Thring was already musing on this question when his dilemma was made more complicated by the discovery of seven cases of scarlet fever amongst the boys at Borth on October 26th.⁴⁰

With no hospital and no school sanatorium, Dr Childs initially feared that the school might have to break up, but within an hour Thring had found an isolated house with room for 25 beds although, as it was still being built, it had neither doors nor windows - at least until the workmen finished at 11pm that night. The sanatorium matron who had come with the boys from Uppingham scrubbed the floor overnight, and the first patients moved in next day.⁴¹ A number of nurses were summoned from London, where Dr Childs had previously worked. Large amounts of disinfectant and carbolic

³⁷ *Aberystwyth Observer* 21 October 1876.

³⁸ Skrine: *Uppingham by the Sea* pp. 79-80.

³⁹ Rawnsley, WF: *Edward Thring: Teacher and Poet* (1899) p. 91.

⁴⁰ Skrine: *Uppingham by the Sea* p. 76.

⁴¹ Rawnsley: *Edward Thring* p. 54.

soap were applied to floors – to the annoyance of some boys who claimed that they caused sore throats, and to the alarm of some of the cottage owners, who feared for their carpets.

The cause and source of the outbreak were never discovered, but it was over within ten days and all the boys recovered. Skrine reckoned that the best disinfectant applied was probably the strong winds ‘which arrived ten days after the first case; all windows and doors were opened wide, and the boys were directed to bring down their rugs, great-coats, and dressing-gowns, and spread them out for purification on the pebbles of the beach’.⁴² Fortunately the parents were learning to take such things in their stride, after already experiencing so many dramatic events from a distance (if they even heard about many of them).

Thring had moved fast and successfully; much had been learned in a year including the need to be proactive with the press.⁴³ But it did not prevent a distinctly critical editorial appearing in the *Lancet*, stating that Thring would not be able to blame the RSA for this outbreak, preaching the need for eternal vigilance, and comparing Uppingham’s disease record and medical care arrangements very unfavourably with those of Marlborough.⁴⁴ The allegations were robustly answered in a letter from Dr Childs a week later, assuring parents and the world at large that he was fully qualified, and fully in attendance at Borth; and that the outbreak was now over.⁴⁵

⁴² Skrine: *Uppingham by the Sea* pp. 76-77.

⁴³ *Lancet* 2 December 1876. Childs wrote to the journal, giving facts and figures about the number of cases and denying rumours that the school was ‘entirely devoid of medical supervision’.

⁴⁴ *Lancet* 25 November 1876.

⁴⁵ *Lancet* 2 December 1876.

The decision about whether or not to return to Uppingham in January 1877 became clearer as December began. Thring had already been receiving rumours for some weeks of individual typhoid cases back at home; with the disease's reputation for striking in autumn, this was scarcely surprising.⁴⁶ He wrote to the LGB on December 5th, to alert it to the news, and to the growing likelihood that the sewer work would over-run so much that the school would be unable to return at New Year.⁴⁷ He pointed out that the LGB had never fixed a new date for Dr Power's inspection, after it had been postponed earlier in the year, and he suggested that it was surely now time for a new LGB inspection. He recommended a Dr Buchanan. The LGB, unaccustomed to being given such specific advice, took great exception to his letter. It put up the shutters, replying that the School must decide for itself where it should re-assemble in January; such questions did not fall within the recent Public Health Act; it would give no advice.⁴⁸

The term ended with a concert in the Assembly Rooms in Aberystwyth and the next evening a performance of Handel's *Messiah* at the Temperance Hall. The pupils departed with no indication of where they would reassemble next term: 'In the darkness before dawn, the special train carried them (home), to await with curiosity their next marching orders'.⁴⁹ Although staff wanted definite news about this, it made sense to keep all options open as long as possible – partly to see how rapidly the sewerage work proceeded, and partly to see whether the Uppingham winter brought any significant number of new cases of typhoid. Thring was secretly resigned to the fact that they would be back in Borth in January - and it may be revealing about his

⁴⁶ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 64: Thring's diary 27 November 1876.

⁴⁷ TNA MH12/9816: Thring to LGB 5 December 1876.

⁴⁸ Ibid: LGB internal memo 5 December 1876.

⁴⁹ Skrine: *Uppingham by the Sea* p. 85.

reading of the pupils' state of mind (as well as that of the staff) that he chose not to tell them before many of them left to spend Christmas in Uppingham or elsewhere.

As chapter 8, sections 5 and 6 shows, this was probably the lowest point in Thring's entire year at Borth. Even the normally supportive John Skrine criticised him for the strained relationships of this moment:

Had he (Thring) spoken to masters in the same spirit in which he spoke to the boys (whom he quite converted to endurance and cheerfulness) we should not look back upon that time with the disgusting consciousness that a heroic enterprise had in truth such a shabby lining of timidity and sulks and half-heartedness – and even cross-purposes which he thought of as treason.⁵⁰

It is a less than generous judgement, given all the problems which Thring faced, his workload both in Borth and behind the scenes to keep things moving in Uppingham, and the physical demands of his job at an age (55) when some would have seen retirement not far away.

5) SPRING TERM 1877

The start of the new term gave a further rude awakening to the realities of atlantic coastal life. The boys returned on January 19th 1877 – during a howling gale. Overall numbers had increased again⁵¹. There followed nearly a month of fierce gales and storms which must have tested cheerfulness to the limit.⁵²

⁵⁰ See ch. 8 section 6.

⁵¹ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 pp. 64-65: Thring's diary 21 January 1877.

⁵² Skrine: *Uppingham by the Sea* p. 86.

Yet there was a general feeling that this really would be the final term away from Uppingham, and the air of despondency amongst some of the staff had lifted as the result of the holiday. Thring was determined to put a good face on it all. In a letter dated January 21st he declared:

Though naturally very sorry that Uppingham is not ready to receive us, it is an unspeakable relief to me that we spend another term here. As far as the boys are concerned, there are so many advantages here that they are great gainers. [But] We are the main sufferers...⁵³

- by which he meant the masters and their families. Not all the wives and children were still there. Some had already gone to warmer accommodation in Aberystwyth, and a few had actually resettled back in Uppingham. They sent a regular stream of flowers, fruit and vegetables to Borth from boarding house gardens when spring came. The extent of this traffic eventually drew protests from the railway company, after a school servant travelled down to Wales with not only his own luggage but also no fewer than fourteen hampers and boxes.⁵⁴

A week into term two new boys went off on a ramble one afternoon on to Borth Head, a mile to the south. They were still missing at tea time; search parties went out again, recalling the incident some months before, to search both marsh and coastland. At 9pm the boys were located, cut off by the tide and perched on a rock halfway up the

⁵³ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 65: Thring to WN Lawson 21 January 1877.

⁵⁴ Skrine: *Uppingham by the Sea* pp. 87-89.

cliff, where they had apparently told stories to each other for 5 hours to keep their spirits up.⁵⁵

A few days later (29 January 1877) there occurred what the *Aberystwyth Observer* described as ‘the most violent hurricane that has ever been known in the district’. The gale howled for three days and coincided with a spring tide; even the locals found the intensity of it all unusual:

The waves, mountain-high, were breaking upon the houses so that the poor people were in imminent danger. The houses were flooded, and the furniture floating about the houses. The roads and fences were entirely destroyed. Never such an event occurred in the memory of any man living in the village.⁵⁶

The damage was certainly severe. According to Skrine, at high tide:

for an hour the narrow ridge on which the village stands was swept by a storm of foam, while from moment to moment, a wave exploding against the crest of the ridge, would leap in through the intervals between the houses, and carrying along a drift of sea-weed and shingle, splintered timber, and wrecked peat-stacks, go eddying down into the drowned pastures beyond. Yet when the dawn came, and men began to count their losses, there were but a few to record. The embankment at the south end of the village had been beaten flat, and the road behind it buried under a silt of shingle. The nearest houses to it

⁵⁵ Ibid p. 90.

⁵⁶ CA: Borth Infant School logbook.

had been flooded and threatened with collapse.⁵⁷

The boys appear to have played a full and commendable part in helping with the clearing up. With another high tide due that evening, they were organised into gangs of workers by houses. Much of the daylight part of the afternoon was spent passing large stones from hand to hand, and carrying new wooden stakes to and fro, helping to repair breaches in the sea-wall. The road was cleared of shingle, and peat-sods were taken round to each cottage. (It was to be a fortnight before trains could run again, and coal and oil were soon in short supply.) Old railway sleepers were laid between the hotel and the wooden schoolroom to form a makeshift path.

The school's efforts were certainly appreciated. Mr Lewis from the post office sent a warm letter to Thring on Feb 2nd praising the efforts of both staff and boys, following a motion, carried with acclaim, at a public meeting to demand long-term improvements to the sea wall. A further storm blew up on February 19th, ripping tiles off roofs and causing boys in attic bedrooms to retreat downstairs. Thring kept some of them company with as large a supply of biscuits as he could find.⁵⁸ The *Cambrian News* (23 February) described a scene of more dead sheep, bathing machines overturned, and battered-down haystacks, but compared with the earlier drama, this storm was a mild one.

6) FAREWELL

On Tuesday March 20th the School gave a farewell concert in Aberystwyth. It was ambitious (including works by Bach, Beethoven, Handel and Mendelssohn), but

⁵⁷ Skrine: *Uppingham by the Sea* p. 93.

⁵⁸ Ibid pp. 98-99.

probably under-rehearsed, judging by the account which appeared in the *USM* (Spring 1877), whose reviewer also observed: 'We returned home by special (train) to Borth, with the happy thoughts of a lie-a-bed next morning. There was a good deal of uproarious merriment in some of the carriages on our way...' The boys knew that the great adventure was coming to an end. It seems likely too that they had had enough.

For Thring himself the prospect of the return to Uppingham brought predictably mixed feelings. At times the worry and uncertainty had lowered his spirits. He reflected in a letter to an old friend in February that 'it is curious that after so many years' work one's working life should have been on the scaffold, so to say, three or four times this last twelve months, and each time a reprieve at the eleventh hour'.⁵⁹ His debts were a great source of worry to him.⁶⁰ Yet he also believed that:

there is plenty of work before me yet. Why else is it I have got my health back so curiously – health, I have never had all my working life? And then, too, I have learned so much from this time... I am just fitted for good work now.

Whether this improvement in health was a physical reality, or more of a psychological improvement brought about by a prolonged change of scene, it is hard to say. In some ways the experience of leading the school at Borth must have been so different from that of the previous 25 years in Uppingham, that it might seem similar to a year-long sabbatical leave in modern times. He gave a long lecture to students of the new

⁵⁹ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 66: Thring to Revd. AH Boucher 2 February 1877.

⁶⁰ Skrine: *A Memory* pp. 191-193.

University College of Wales on March 28th in which he expounded one of his favourite themes: the link between education and life.⁶¹

The school was still in session over Easter. A week later, as it prepared to break up at Borth for the last time, he declared: 'A last day has come, a day of judgement such as never has come to this school before, and methinks will never come again... never more shall we worship together in this little church.' Reflecting on the 'circle of death' from which they had escaped a year earlier and the deliverance which Borth represented, he wanted that 'this last day be also a day of birth to the truer life with our risen Lord.'⁶²

The farewells were lengthy and effusive. A reading of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, with Mendelssohn's music to accompany it, was given by the school on April 6th, with a second performance for the people of the village.⁶³ Almost the entire village turned out in front of the hotel for the formal ceremonies of songs and speeches on the evening of April 10th. Mr Jones of Brynowen, a farmer, presided; he referred to the apprehension of the impending 'invasion' a year before. They would look with interest on the future careers of the boys, and if disease ever struck Uppingham again they would be welcome to return. Thring and Dr Childs were singled out for special praise. The school's efforts to clear up after the storm were remembered.

Thring replied that 'For my own part it is not the last time I hope to spend in Borth. (applause)... I hope to come back next time, not as an exile, but coming from home to

⁶¹ *Cambrian News* 3 April 1877. It was printed more or less in full.

⁶² Thring: *Sermons* Vol. 2 p. 319.

⁶³ Skrine: *A Memory* pp. 101-2.

happy holiday to spend it pleasantly among my friends here. (Loud cheers).'⁶⁴ One of his last tasks before leaving Borth was to write a second long article for the *Times*, in which he described the kindnesses they had received and the farewell they had been given. He pictured 'the shore silent of boy voices, a great stillness out on the sands, the campaign over and a strange struggle closed'.⁶⁵

He wrote a letter on the final full day of term, with the farewell celebrations only a few hours away and his sixth form doing their English exam in front of him:

I was never more puzzled in my life to know with any accuracy what my real feelings are. Such a confession [he surely meant confusion]⁶⁶ of feeling as cannot be described ebbs and flows in my breast. Sorrow however predominates. Sorrow at going back to my prison at Uppingham with its bounded roads, its petty annoyances, and its ill-will, and leaving this free bright shore, these glorious hills, the hearty welcome and the helping hands of the people here.⁶⁷

Skrine believed that, despite all the worry, the Borth year was the happiest of all Thring's 34 years of school work. Thring revelled in the sense of space, the bracing sea air, the welcome from local people. It was even claimed that some mothers named their children after him.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ *Cambrian News* 10 April 1877: see also *Mercury* 20 April 1877.

⁶⁵ *Times* 23 April 1877.

⁶⁶ Cormac Rigby believes that Parkin mis-transcribed this word when editing the diaries.

⁶⁷ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 pp. 66-68: Thring to GR Parkin 10 April 1877.

⁶⁸ Skrine: *A Memory* pp. 188-189.

By the end of the week the pupils were gone.⁶⁹ ‘And so the grand page of life is turned,’ wrote Thring on April 13th, ‘the chapter come to an end. But it has been glorious’.⁷⁰ Skrine added:

Some of our company have lingered on for business, and a few from reluctance to have done with it. All is over and the place is very silent, except for the chink of hammers where they are breaking down our wooden walls [dismantling the schoolroom]⁷¹... The village seems even quieter, the people at their doors, sorry now that the stirring social year is over and the little fishing town has returned to its old solitary nothingness.⁷²

As the warmer weather of spring approached, it was possible to feel nostalgic. It was time to go home.

7) AFTER 1877

In the years which followed, the Borth commemoration on St Barnabas’ Day each June became an annual event in the life of the school chapel, with Thring and others preaching sermons which likened the year in Wales to the providential journeyings of the Israelites in the Old Testament.⁷³ He wrote the words of a set of *Borth lyrics*, a

⁶⁹ Skrine: *Uppingham by the Sea* p. 107.

⁷⁰ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 p. 69: Thring’s diary 13 April 1877.

⁷¹ Just as the thesis was being finalised, correspondence between JP Rudman (the school archivist) and Owen Jenkins (captain of the Borth and Ynyslas Golf Club) suggested that the wooden walls of the schoolroom became the first clubhouse there, so years after the school left for home. It is also believed locally that the school introduced the game to people there.

⁷² Skrine: *Uppingham by the Sea* p. 108.

⁷³ JH Skrine wrote the Borth hymn for the annual commemoration service, set to music by Paul David, Uppingham’s Director of Music. Its opening words are :-
Lord our Fathers have declared it, how thy mighty works befell,
When from Pharaoh’s hand Jehovah brought in peace his Israel
Safe between the heaped waters, safe before the gifted sword
Came the sons of the great promise, came the chosen of the Lord.....

collection of songs commemorating nostalgically the experience they had all lived through.⁷⁴ He spent part of the late summer at Borth at least three times in the next five years, always warmly welcomed,⁷⁵ and in 1880 he was even greeted at the station by a brass band. He wrote to Christian in 1881: 'You will laugh when I tell you that I have been preaching at an Eisteddfod in Borth today'.⁷⁶ It is said that many Uppingham pupils who had been at Borth copied his example.⁷⁷ So did at least one housemaster, whose passion for fishing had been acquired during the year there.⁷⁸

There was no doubt that Thring had brought to bear on these events a remarkable belief, bravery and educational leadership, fuelled by the recognition that they threatened his life's work. The Victorian headmasters have long been known for their moral uprightness - and the creative determination which the shaping of their own particular schools represented. Rather less has been written about them as organisers – and as managers of people and resources.

After the school returned from Borth, the Cambrian Hotel continued to dominate the coastline for a century until its demolition in the late 1970s. It rarely made money, but it housed a number of other educational institutions in times of war or other crisis⁷⁹ – including physical education students from Chelsea College during the 1939-45 war - before being purchased by the Welsh League of Youth. On its site there now stands a modern tourist office, with a small plaque next to the door recalling *Uppingham: In*

⁷⁴ These were set to music by Paul David, and sold as bound copies.

⁷⁵ Parkin: *Edward Thring* Vol. 2 p. 94: Thring's diary 23 September 1879.

⁷⁶ UA: Thring to Christian August 1881.

⁷⁷ *Cambrian News* 17 November 1978: article by 'Will o' the whispers'.

⁷⁸ USM 1908. The housemaster was Sam Haslam.

⁷⁹ Stranack, David: *Schools at War: A Story of Education, Evacuation and Endurance in The Second World War* (Chichester, 2005): a large number of schools were evacuated from cities to rural locations during the 1939-45 war.

grateful memory of 1876 and 1877. The *Uppingham Fields* are still situated near the community hall and sports centre. Some of Thring's surviving Old Boys donated a fine east window to St Matthew's Church in 1925 which carries the inscription from the psalms: 'Thou shalt not be afraid, for the pestilence that walkest in darkness nor for the sickness that destroyeth in the noonday'.

Uppingham itself would later play host to a school forced out of its home during a crisis; Kingswood School migrated to Rutland from Bath for much of the 1939-45 war.

APPENDIX 6 – THE AFTERMATH

1) FINANCIAL RECKONING FOR THE SCHOOL

As a result of the Borth adventure, Thring found himself deeply in debt.¹ Forced to end such luxuries as his annual expedition to Grasmere,² he appealed to the trustees for help. They showed scant sympathy and played for time, merely agreeing in the first instance (June 1877) to reimburse the travel costs of the day boys to Borth.³

At their meeting in October that year the trustees passed two motions implicitly critical of Thring - for a failure of accounting procedures and for the level of spending on concerts and musical instruments. Ignoring the short-term financial pressures on Thring and his staff, their minute book also records that:

They had before them this day a memorial from the masters concerning expenses of the school at Borth. They find themselves without accurate knowledge of the amount and particulars of the expenses neither do they know who are liable for them, whether the masters as a body or the masters individually in varying proportions. They resolve to form a committee of investigation and request to be furnished with full information, when they will further consider the subject.

This committee was chaired by Sir John Fludyer; Thring must have welcomed the inclusion of both Birley and Jacob, but Wales was also a member of it.

¹ Parkin, GR, (ed): *Edward Thring, Headmaster of Uppingham School: Life, Diary and Letters* (1898) Vol. 2 p. 77. Thring suggested that the debt amounted to £3,000 in his diary on 12 February 1878 – but it is likely that at this point he underestimated the true extent of his financial problems.

² Rigby manuscript (n/d) ch. 25 p. 3.

³ UA: Trustees' Minute Book 13 June 1877.

The trustees believed that the debt could be gradually reduced by an increase in the number of boarders – something which they must have known Thring would strongly oppose.⁴ At their April meeting in that year they had also passed a resolution ‘to bring the whole financial condition of the School before the Charity Commissioners’. The argument dragged on for some months and through several board meetings, before in October 1878 they agreed to grant limited payments to Thring and a long list of masters, totalling only £3,275.⁵

Thring had meanwhile contacted the commissioners on his own account. He sent a petition on April 15th 1878,⁶ in which he urged that the Borth expenses should fall on the trustees. This stated that he ‘approached the question with great diffidence’, but he wrote with passion about how the school had been built up through the financial contributions which he and the masters had made – describing them as ‘the living representatives of the new foundation’.

He suggested that the loss to himself and the masters of the autumn 1875 epidemic *alone* totalled nearly £4,000 in lost fees. Hard on the heels of this had come the cost of the improvements to the houses. After the March 1876 outbreak there had been the additional expense of the move to Borth, whose costs he estimated at over £3,000 – to which the trustees had contributed a mere £250, only a third of what had been raised through Captain Withington’s fighting fund. Another £300 had been given ‘from within the school itself’ (presumably by masters and other supporters).

⁴ Trustees’ Minute Book 5 April 1878.

⁵ Trustees’ Minute Book 18 October 1878.

⁶ UA: *The Petition of Edward Thring, MA, Head Master of Uppingham School.*

He tried to show that the houses could not increase their boarder capacity. He also suggested that the Borth migration had merely exacerbated a longstanding problem 'the impossibility of carrying on the school (under the fee arrangements fixed by the commissioners a decade earlier) without an increase of funds'. He believed that an additional sum of at least £20,000 needed to be invested in plant and equipment if Uppingham was to function properly. His conclusion was that the tuition fee needed to be raised from £30 to £40.

The trustees, fearful at the financial consequences if the commissioners were to back Thring's petition, then tried again to evade all responsibility for the move to Borth. Thring wrote to the commissioners once more on May 24th, protesting at this. He again described the sequence of events in 1875-6 and the immense pressures which he and the housemasters had faced; he sought to demonstrate that he had informed and consulted with the trustees at every stage.⁷

His efforts were successful; the commissioners were in no doubt that:

...although the removal of the school to Borth had not the express sanction of the trustees, yet their subsequent acquiescence in it must be assumed... from the part they took in the management of the school during the time of its stay at Borth.⁸

⁷ UA: Letter of Edward Thring MA to the Charity Commissioners 24 May 1878.

⁸ UA: Letter from Charity Commissioners to Revd Sir JH Fludyer 20 June 1878.

They agreed to the suggested fee increase, but they exempted the small number of day pupils from this additional charge. They added that it was highly desirable in the longer-term that the School should buy up the houses from the masters.

The additional revenue would ease Thring's burdens, but no more than that. It seems certain that he and his colleagues never recouped much of the money expended during the move to Borth. The trustees did however agree to take over the sanatorium in 1878 – and its mortgage, half of which still remained unpaid.⁹

2) THRING'S GROWING REPUTATION IN OLD AGE

In all respects but the financial one, Thring had won the day. His final decade as headmaster was an altogether quieter and more mellow period than the previous twenty-five years, as his fame became more widely known. He felt rejuvenated by his teaching: : 'It was most touching to hear my Upper Sixth telling me, sundry of them 'how happy they had been here especially in my division'.¹⁰ Where the staff was concerned: 'One moves amongst the masters so secure and at ease and not on the watch any more for the next plot or stab'.¹¹

His reputation was secure and he was widely respected. A stream of visitors from schools at home and abroad sought him out for advice. He took a keen interest in women's education and Uppingham played host to the first conference of headmistresses just before his death. 1884 saw the school's tercentenary celebrations.

⁹ UA: undated note, and Trustees' Minute Book 15 February 1878. It had been owing from the date when it had been built in 1869.

¹⁰ Parkin: *Thring* Vol. 2 pp. 104-105: Thring's diary 30 July 1880.

¹¹ Ibid p. 110: Thring's diary 3 July 1877.

He had now added to his reputation, by becoming a successful author. *Education and School*, written many years earlier in 1864, had not been a commercial success; in 1883 he was persuaded to write *The Theory and Practice of Teaching*. This received very enthusiastic reviews in both the British and American press. It was repeatedly reprinted, and it sold over 25,000 copies, becoming something of a textbook for teacher-training colleges.¹² He wrote and lectured. One lecture, to Sunday School teachers, was held in the garden of Barnard Smith's former rectory in Glaston.¹³ He was reaping the fruits of success.

3) THE MASTERS

Of Thring's housemasters at the time of Borth, most stayed on at Uppingham until retirement, a country rectory or headship of another school called them. William Campbell, whose idea to *flit* had precipitated the exodus to Borth, became temporary headmaster after Thring's death until a successor was appointed. John Skrine, Thring's faithful chronicler of Borth in *Uppingham by the Sea* failed to gain the post he coveted, and he left in 1888 to become warden of Glenalmond.

George Mullins, whose little son had been one of the early victims of the typhoid outbreak, lost another son to pneumonia in 1893.¹⁴ Thring's relationship with Hodgkinson, once so close, never recovered from the pressures to which the typhoid outbreak exposed it. In the early 1880s Hodgkinson left Uppingham altogether – to be succeeded in the Lower School by Bagshawe.

¹² Matthews, Bryan: *By God's Grace: A History of Uppingham School* (Maidstone, 1984) p. 111.

¹³ *Rutland, Oundle and Stamford Post* 2 July 1887. The rectory was only a few yards from Smith's grave, with its substantial granite cross, on which is inscribed 'God is love'. See also Pattenden, Philip and Thomson, Auriol: 'The Snuffing of Sanitary Smith: Fellow and Senior Bursar', *Peterhouse Record* (Cambridge, 2005) p. 54.

¹⁴ UA: Tate, David: *A History of West Deyne* (unpublished manuscript).

The commissioners' recommendations in the late 1870s about changes in boarding house ownership were not implemented until much later. The relationship between the School and its housemasters changed radically during the twentieth century: in the years after the Great War, the school began buying them from their owners so that new housemasters would not have to bear the burden purchasing them from their predecessors,¹⁵ and from 1946 it steadily ended the arrangement whereby they drew profits as boarding-house keepers. Henceforth housemasters would be paid a salary instead.¹⁶

4) DR THOMAS BELL

Bagshawe's move to the Lower School aroused new concerns for Dr Bell, who had long known that Bagshawe was no admirer of his. Bell sought the trustees' assurance that even if they had no formal power over the Lower School, they would use their influence to see that Bagshawe did not dispense with Bell's services, having already moved his family to Childs' patients' list.¹⁷

As things turned out, Bell need not have worried about being displaced. Five years after the school's return, Christopher Childs fell in love with Thring's daughter, Margaret. Twelve years her senior, he was asked not to court her, but was discovered with her in the garden and dismissed for breach of promise in that respect. Nothing came of the liaison, and it seems likely that Childs' departure was greatly regretted by many in both school and town.¹⁸

¹⁵ Graham, JP: *Forty Years of Uppingham* (1932) pp. 161-162.

¹⁶ Matthews, *By God's Grace* pp. 180-181.

¹⁷ UA: Bell, Thomas: *Letterbook 1876-1904*: Bell to Jacob 21 June 1878. See also ch. 7 section 1.

¹⁸ USM 1882: Given the circumstances, the article is extremely warm. It seems unlikely in such a small

Thomas Bell himself remained in general practice in Uppingham; he secured the post of school's sanitary officer (in addition to his medical responsibilities) after the departure of Childs, and eventually became medical officer of the workhouse and public vaccinator too, on the retirement of Dr Walford.¹⁹ He also contributed one article to the *Lancet*, in 1899, entitled *A woman disembowelled by a cow*. For many years he was a JP and churchwarden. He died on 11 July 1914.

The *USM* in its tribute understandably ignored the pricklier side of his character and reflected on all that the school owed him for his steadfastness during the crisis years:

His life was a constant influence for good, both in school and in town... The fact that he would not give up work, and was, within a few days of his death, attending some patients, is a striking example of that persistence. A commonplace life? Aye! Perhaps so. But an efficient working life, keeping duty strictly in sight throughout. Who shall say that England does not need such lives?²⁰

The practice passed on his death to his son, William – who represented the fourth generation in the family to serve in this way.²¹ Bell's daughter Mary took up medicine

community that the reasons for his departure would have remained secret.

¹⁹ *Medical Register* 1912. However, see also Hornung, EW: *Fathers of Men* (1919) pp. 90-91 – in which Bell appears in fictional form as 'Old Hill', the school doctor who misdiagnoses a heart condition in the hero. Unlike Bell, he errs on the side of caution.

²⁰ *USM* Summer 1914.

²¹ *Ibid* June 1915.

herself and was briefly medical officer to Wycombe Abbey school before moving to hospital work in Norwich.²²

Less than a decade after the events which threatened Dr Bell's career, MOSA (the Medical Officers of Schools' Association) was founded (1884). One of its first tasks was to draw up guidelines for guarding schools 'from the outbreak and spread of preventable infectious diseases',²³ and three years after its inception Clement Dukes published his first edition of *Health at School*.²⁴

5) DR ALFRED HAVILAND

Bell's arch-enemy, Dr Alfred Haviland, retired as MOH for the Northampton combined districts in the early 1880s,²⁵ and went to live for fifteen years on the Isle of Man, firstly in Peel and later at Clarence Terrace, Douglas.²⁶ He threw himself into local life there, and as much in demand as a writer and lecturer,²⁷ particularly about the island's climate, glaciation and geology.²⁸

Shortly after his arrival Haviland appears to have met his match as a controversialist in the shape of Revd Theophilus Talbot, as a result of two lectures in 1883.²⁹ In these,

²² *The Medical Who's Who* 1935.

²³ Preface to the First Edition of *the Handbook of School Health* – MOSA website.

²⁴ Dukes, Clement: *Health at School Considered in its Mental, Moral and Physical Aspects* (1887, 1894, 1905).

²⁵ The 1881 census shows that he was still living in Northampton, St Giles district. No evidence has yet been found of him arousing similar controversies within other RSAs in his district.

²⁶ MNH: 1891 census: Douglas Ward 6, and Manx Antiquarian Society ledger 1892-1908.

²⁷ MHN: Haviland, Alfred: 'Peel: Past, Present and Future- a Lecture in Aid of the Sailors' Shelter and Fishermen's Refuge', *Isle of Man Times* 3 May 1884.

²⁸ MHN: *Lancet* 11 June 1887: Haviland, Alfred: 'The Manx Climate'; *IOM Times* 6 February 1886 'The Necessity for Collecting and Arranging the Ascertained Facts relative to the Glaciation of the Isle of Man'; *IOM Times* 16 January 1886: 'The Isle of Man and the Glacial Period'.

²⁹ MHN: Haviland, Alfred: 1) *The Essential Requisites of a Seaside Health Resort, and the Requirements of a Health Seeker, with the Physical Geography and Climate of the Isle of Man – a Lecture delivered at the Masonic Hall, Douglas, 13 June 1883*; 2) *Consumption, the Social and Geographical Causes conducing to its Prevalence: illustrated by a coloured map – a Lecture*

Haviland praised the healthy Manx climate, and suggested that it resulted in a very low numbers of cases of consumption there. These provoked a furious response in no fewer than five long review articles by Talbot, a local antiquarian, who claimed that Haviland's research was hasty and superficial, that he grossly underestimated the rigours of the Manx climate, and that consumption on the island was far greater than he had been able to understand, during his, as yet, very brief time there. Talbot also attacked Haviland for trying to raise funds for the publication of the lectures.³⁰ Talbot was a man who:

knew something about everything and everything about something...
frequently occupied in exposing errors made by writers... he ruthlessly
destroyed some of the most cherished Manx traditions... in his zeal for
historical accuracy, he was the perfect iconoclast...³¹

but his comments are interesting in view of the bitter criticisms which Haviland's research methods and judgements on Uppingham had provoked from Thring and his supporters, less than a decade earlier.

Thereafter Haviland compiled a 21-page pamphlet on Port St Mary as a healthy resort,³² and a series of recommendations about new house buildings and drainage.³³ He played a leading role in the inauguration and continuation of three island societies,

delivered at the Victoria Hotel, Douglas, 17 December 1883.

³⁰ MHN: *Manx Sun*, 29 October 1883: Talbot, Revd T: 1) 'Mr Haviland's lecture reviewed'; 2) Ibid 7, 20 and 26 November and 4 December 1883 'Mr Haviland's Lecture and its Publication'; 3) See also *IOM Times* 16 June 1883.

³¹ MHN: *Manx Quarterly* (1902) p. 365: obituary article.

³² MHN: Haviland, Alfred: *Port St Mary as a Health Resort* (1891). He had written similarly about Brighton (1882) and Scarborough (1883).

³³ MHN: Haviland, Alfred: *Report on the Ballaquayle Building Estate, near Douglas IOM* (Douglas, 1886).

devoted to astronomy, antiquarian studies and medicine.³⁴ He also sketched and painted the local scenery,³⁵ and returned to the mainland at the turn of the century.³⁶ He died in at Frimley Green, Surrey in 1903.³⁷

The Lower School in Stockerston Road was absorbed into the school itself and became a senior boys' house in 1919 and was then converted for use by girls in the early 1990s – twenty years after the former sanatorium (Fairfield) had been put to the same purpose. The Uppingham workhouse on the Leicester Road closed in 1914, and briefly became an army hospital during the Great War. The site was sold to the school for demolition in 1923, and a new boarding house (Constables) was built there.³⁸

6) WALES, BROWN, GUY AND THE SANITARY EXPERTS

Revd William Wales retired as Rector of Uppingham only two years after the school's return, living first of all in Northamptonshire and finally in Leamington Spa. He died in 1889.³⁹ His steward (and the union clerk) William H. Brown did not last long after Wales left, resigning in 1879 after it had been discovered that he had been stealing clients' money entrusted to him as a solicitor to invest – an activity which resulted in his affairs going into liquidation in 1878, and a trial at the summer assizes at Oakham in 1880 where 'the fountains of justice were poisoned... [when] some indiscreet

³⁴ Haviland, Alfred: 1) 'The Rising of the Sun at the Summer Solstice from Stonehenge' (*Manx Astronomical Society* 1893); 2) *IOM Times* 26 January 1889: 'The Physical Geography of the Isle of Man: Inaugural Address to the Manx Geological Society, established October 1888, delivered 7 January 1889'; 3) *Lancet* 31 July 1897: 'Inaugural Address on Medical Geography as an aid to clinical medicine – delivered at the first meeting of the IOM Medical Society, 4 December 1896'; 4) *IOM Times* 29 March 1888: 'Mann or Man? – an extract from the Report of the Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the IOM Natural History and Antiquarian Society, held at Douglas School of Art'.

³⁵ The Manx Musuem in Douglas holds five examples.

³⁶ 1901 census: Frimley, Surrey.

³⁷ *Northampton Herald* 13 June 1903; *BMJ* 27 June 1903.

³⁸ Traylen, Tony, (comp): *Uppingham in Rutland* (Stamford, 1982) p. 6.

³⁹ *Leamington Spa Courier* 24 August 1889. *Northampton Herald*, same date: obituary article.

admirer had endeavoured to corrupt the body of jurors and influence them in various ways'. It could not be shown that Brown was involved in this, but the trial was moved to London, where he was subsequently acquitted in December. However, he was then subject to the Law Society's disciplinary procedures and was struck off in 1882 after his case was heard by two judges of the High Court.⁴⁰ Wales' successor as Rector awarded the stewardship of the rectory manor to Frank Edward Hodgkinson, son of the former headmaster of the Lower School.

JC Guy remained as clerk to the trustees until 1909. A year later, the school appointed its first bursar⁴¹ – in recognition of the increasing financial complexity of running such enterprises.

Robert Rawlinson received a knighthood in 1883 and remained chief engineering inspector of the LGB until 1888. Rogers Field was back in Uppingham again in 1879, recommending further extension to the sewage farm on Seaton Lane.⁴² His career included advising Wellington College on its diphtheria outbreak⁴³ and designing the drainage systems for both Sandringham House and Bagshot Park. He used his Uppingham experience as the basis for a highly detailed handbook on sanitary bye-laws which was adopted for national use by the LGB in 1877.⁴⁴ He also invented a new type of aneroid barometer.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ *Solicitors' Journal* 25 March 1882.

⁴¹ *USR* (eleventh issue, 1997) p. 31: Major. C. Bland, Bursar from 1910.

⁴² Drawings lodged at the Rutland Museum, Oakham in 2005

⁴³ Newsome, David: *A History of Wellington College* (1959) pp. 215-9. It happened in 1891-2, and resulted in the college's temporary evacuation to Malvern.

⁴⁴ CUL: Field, Rogers: *Byelaws and Regulations with Reference to House Drainage: Adopted by the Uppingham RSA and allowed by the LGB* (1878).

⁴⁵ *Times* 3 April 1900: obituary article.

The LGB remained in existence for another forty years, although its relationship with local authorities was significantly changed by the setting-up of county councils and county boroughs under the Local Government Act of 1888. In 1918 it was reorganised and renamed the Ministry of Health.⁴⁶ George Sclater Booth remained as head of the LGB until 1880. He played a major role in piloting the Public Health Act of 1879 through the House of Commons. During the 1880s his energies were increasingly directed towards local affairs in Hampshire, where he was a prominent magistrate and had business interests. A man of many enthusiasms, including hunting and shooting, art and music, he inherited Hoddington House and its estate in 1886, and accepted a peerage a year later, before becoming the first chairman of the new Hampshire county council in 1888. He died at Hoddington in 1894.⁴⁷

7) THRING'S FINAL YEARS

Thring stayed on in Uppingham for another decade after Borth. There had been suggestions to Gladstone that he might be offered church preferment – possibly a canonry or deanery⁴⁸ but nothing came of it. Financial concerns dogged him for the rest of his life. He thought of retiring, but was still too concerned about how little capital he had been able to accumulate over the years.⁴⁹

He had purchased the old Elizabethan schoolroom from the (then) governors in 1863 and allowed its use for carpentry and art; their trustee successors agreed to buy it back from him in 1885 with the proceeds of the school tercentenary fund, but they declined to put proper arrangements in place to protect his wife (Marie) if he died, or to

⁴⁶ Jackson, RM: *The Machinery of Local Government* 1967 p. 257 (footnote) and p. 268

⁴⁷ *New Dictionary of National Biography* (2005) Vol. 6 p. 616

⁴⁸ Matthews: *By God's Grace* p. 111.

⁴⁹ Confirmed by Cormac Rigby in conversation, 2005.

provide an annuity and pension which might allow him to step down - an issue on which he felt particularly disappointed that Jacob failed to support him. He died a comparatively poor man;⁵⁰ when Marie followed, his five children would inherit barely £500 between them.⁵¹

On Saturday October 15th 1887 he wrote in his diary: 'And now to bed, sermon finished, and a blessed feeling of Sunday coming' The final full-stop was never written. He was taken ill in the chapel on the following morning, and left the service. He died in School House six days later, aged 66. The *Times* recorded: 'a throng of mourners from all parts of the country'⁵² at his burial in Uppingham churchyard, conducted by George Christian. One of the wreaths at his funeral came from 'the women of Borth'.⁵³

His obituary article in the *Stamford Mercury* concentrated on his personal and leadership qualities: 'A man of striking gifts and singular strength and separateness of character, he made his name a synonym for the school in whose service he lived and died...his central thought was the giving to boys an individual care, in teaching and moral discipline....' It also quoted 'W', who had written to the *Pall Mall Gazette*: 'Uppingham has lost its second founder and England perhaps her ablest and certainly her most original educationalist since Arnold of Rugby...'

⁵⁰ *New Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004) Vol. 54 p. 683: figures from CGPLA England and Wales. His estate was valued for probate at just over £5,000 in December 1887. Much of this probably resulted from the literary and other successes of his final years.

⁵¹ UA: Rigby, Cormac: unpublished manuscript (n/d) ch 28. p. 17: Thring inherited £6,728 from his grandfather, and after his father's death in 1875 there was a further £3,261. After Marie's death, his five children each received only £111.5.0. from his estate.

⁵² *Times* 28 October 1887.

⁵³ *Mercury* 4 November 1887.

After listing all his other achievements during his thirty-four years in Uppingham, 'W' concluded:

He might have been a great soldier if he had not been a great schoolmaster; for he was a born leader of men. This characteristic was never more forcibly illustrated than in 1876 – a feat, considering the magnitude of the undertaking and the risks which it involved, unprecedented in the annals of English education.⁵⁴

While this thesis seeks to demonstrate that the pressures on Thring's opponents were more pressing and more complex than has previously been recognised, it confirms the view that he was a man of remarkable determination, tenacity and vision.

8) THRING'S REPUTATION IN RETROSPECT

Historians of Victorian education have mostly seen the Borth adventure as a pivotal event in Thring's career – one which marked the end of a period of sustained battling before a final decade in which his achievements and reputation were beyond dispute. He kept the forces of philathleticism at bay, at a time when other schools were increasingly embracing them.⁵⁵ Some emphasise his long struggle with the Uppingham trustees, his extreme single-mindedness and determination in the face of adversity,⁵⁶ and the Borth challenge as key factors in this.

No major biography of Thring has been published, although there is one short study, Donald Leinster-Mackay's *The Educational World of Edward Thring* (1987). Alicia

⁵⁴ *Mercury* 28 October 1887

⁵⁵ UA: Tozer, Malcolm: *Physical Education at Thring's Uppingham* (Uppingham, 1976) p. 177.

⁵⁶ Leinster-Mackay, Donald: *The Educational World of Edward Thring* (1987) p 12.

Percival wrote, in *Very Superior Men* (1973), of those who set up the Headmasters' Conference: 'it must have been very clear to them that only a very exceptional man would be able to get and to hold them together. It could only be Thring'.⁵⁷ David Newsome's book *Godliness and Good Learning; Four studies on a Victorian Ideal*⁵⁸ (1961, p 220) describes Thring as 'the headmaster who most determined the shape of things to come... his special genius lay in his realization that a school exists to educate *all* its pupils...' He is also extensively mentioned in most books about Victorian public schools, including those by TW Bamford,⁵⁹ John Honey,⁶⁰ JA Mangan⁶¹ and Brian Simon and Ian Bradley.⁶² By contrast, Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy believes that 'Thring's influence in all fields has been considerably exaggerated'.⁶³

New writing about Victorian public schools has been much less prolific over the past two decades than previously. Such more recent studies of Victorian education as do exist, focus on individual figures rather than on broad historical themes – for example, books on Thomas Arnold by Michael McCrum⁶⁴ and Terence Copley,⁶⁵ and Jeremy Potter's life of John Percival.⁶⁶ A number of individual schools have produced their own histories of themselves, notably those in the series produced by James and James – but these tend to include comparatively little about the national educational context in which an individual school operated.

⁵⁷ Percival, Alicia: *Very Superior Men: Some Early Public School Headmasters and Their Achievements* (1973) p. 198.

⁵⁸ Newsome, David: *Godliness and Good Learning; Four Studies on a Victorian Ideal* (1961) p. 220.

⁵⁹ Bamford, TW: *Rise of the Public Schools: A Study of Boys' Public Boarding Schools in England and Wales from 1837 to the Present Day* (1967).

⁶⁰ Honey, JR de S: *Tom Brown's Universe: The Development of the Victorian Public School* (1977).

⁶¹ Mangan, JA: *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School* (Cambridge, 1981).

⁶² Simon, Bryan, and Bradley, Ian: *The Victorian Public School: Studies in the Development of an Educational Institution* (Dublin, 1975).

⁶³ Gathorne-Hardy, Jonathan: *The Public School Phenomenon* (1977) p. 167.

⁶⁴ McCrum, Michael: *Thomas Arnold: Head Master - A Reassessment* (Oxford, 1989).

⁶⁵ Copley, Terence: *Black Tom: Arnold of Rugby* (2002).

⁶⁶ Potter, Jeremy: *Headmaster: The Life of John Percival, Radical Aristocrat* (1997).

Comparisons have inevitably been drawn over the years between Thring and Arnold. Arnold's reputation resulted in part from the fame of Thomas Hughes's *Tom Brown's School Days* and the persuasiveness of his biographers. The headmaster, Jerry Thrale, in the lesser-known school novel by EW Hornung,⁶⁷ was intended to be a fictionalised portrait of Thring; Hornung was a pupil at Uppingham.

A number of Arnold's staff went on to be headmasters elsewhere, spreading his influence as they went, but Thring's colleagues generally stayed in Uppingham; as Alicia Percival wrote, Thring had fewer 'missionaries'. She also believed that 'Arnold may well be said to have changed the *heart* of English education, but it was Thring who changed its *face*'.⁶⁸ EB Castle believed that Thring

was a better schoolmaster than Arnold, and allowing for the fact that Arnold inherited a large school with all its problems ready-made while Thring started with the advantages of a clean slate, his capacity for translating principles into the fabric of school life and organization far exceeded [Arnold's].⁶⁹

On the other hand, TW Bamford believed that Arnold was much the greater man: 'beside [Arnold], his nearest rivals pale into insignificance. Thring was almost a nonentity in his narrowness'.⁷⁰ In this controversy, as in many other matters, lies a major issue for a future biographer of Edward Thring.

⁶⁷ Hornung, E W: *Fathers of Men* (1912).

⁶⁸ Percival: *The Origins of the Headmasters' Conference* (1969) p. 21.

⁶⁹ Castle, EB: *Moral Education in Christian times* (1958) p. 312.

⁷⁰ Simon and Bradley: *The Victorian Public School* p. 71.

ABSTRACT OF SUMS RAISED BY RSAs: Accounts & Papers - Local Government Taxation
Local Taxation: Accounts and Papers: Annual Local Taxation Returns from England and Wales - Rural Sanitary Authorities - see bibliography for ref. nos.

Contributions				CONTS	General Expenses			Special Expenses					EXPS	RSA Rate Value
Gen Expend	Special Expend	MOH/Insp of N	All other receipts	TOTAL	Salaries	Hospitals	Other Expenses	Sewer Construction	Water Provision	Lighting	Other Expenses	Loans repaid	TOTAL	
UPP'M		RSA	No. 413											
1874	402	161	1737	2300	174		20	1866			291		2351	96291
1875	202	276	79	591	237		62		83		151	106	639	97015
1876	202	474	81	795	190		49	50	35		505	134	963	97176
1877	408	819	67	1474	249		124	0 plus special loan 2075	255		392	132	3227	99000
1878	200	703	90	1133	295		48	63 + 890	191		318	330	2125	99435
1879	215	759	93	1124	285		29	62 + special loan 434	30		320	329	1489	99938
1880	206	452	9	667	237		15	6 + loan 5	13		267	355	898	99897
1881	218	501	161	968	385		32	9 + special loan 98	27		270	354	1175	104395
1882	231	508	93	1346	263		189		40			345+281	1118	110996
1883	215	521	233	969	191	37	31	166	12		272	388	1097	not given

New loans	Loan outstanding
	1600
400	1947
	1880
3000	4813
	4647
500	4980
	4797
	4611
	4428
	4244

OAK'M		RSA		No. 412										
1874	304				304	86		86					172	92658
1875	202	11			213	55		15	11				81	92658
1876	2	2	23		27	176		7		2			185	92826
1877	204	179	47		430	189		13	110		59		371	95803
1878	204	333	46	23	606	179		11		146	179		515	95953
1879	204	803	46	19	1072	228		14	10 + 1396 special loan	110	127	250	2135	95982
1880	82	253	46	1	382	209		11	9+ loan 45	15	201	341	831	96643
1881	104	442		23	569	97		11	14 + loan 3	9	234	291	659	96715
1882	119	501	43	21	684	169		15	121	5	150	286	746	108049
1883	23	454	31	12	520	135		7	15	6	204	281	648	not given

	new loan
	2875
1000	3746
500	4097
	3948
	3799
	3650

MKT HB'RO		RSA		No. 402										
1874	161	215		49	425	169		38	237				444	
1875	165	489	86	9	749	202		154	381	33	5		775	147173
1876	288	335	87		710	202			411	15			628	162745
1877	177	163	82		422	215		58	234	7			514	163314
1878	148	296	89	39	572	232		29	183 + 641				1085	163475
1879	247	277	89	95	708	232		36	481	1		39	789	163915
1880	196	462			658	230		38	345 + 215	25		40	893	164996
1881	99	369			468	214		40	336	27			673	133887
1882	207	311		80	598	200		28	312	23		125	688	137618
1883	168	251		82	501	193		35	318	32		124	702	not given

	600 new loan
	580
300	860
	829
	734
300	967

MELTON MOWBRAY		RSA		No. 411										
1874	213	233		6	452	120		22	133				275	
1875	213	262		19	494	190		5	299	52	24		570	136359
1876	214	469		17	700	270		9	65	126	12		482	136359
1877	231	53		10	294	260		5	76	157	2		500	137141
1878	215	338		9	562	60		2	394		57		513	137604
1879	222	288		18	528	213		3	186		53		455	137604
1880	221	266		11	498	270		10	174		51	24	529	137798
1881	148	115		7	270	110		3	69	5		39	226	141035
1882	250	230			480	204		11	250	32	1	38	536	160145
1883	nil	142		19	161	143		6	23	11	57	36	276	not given

	303
	280
	257
	233

STAMFORD		RSA		No. 414										
1874	573			30	603	235		36					271	91556
1875	193			114	307	274		14					288	92800
1876	194			112	306	267		13					280	93225
1877	197			110	307	273		12					285	94766
1878	197			108	305	269		20					289	94520
1879	197			100	297	259		15					274	94614
1880	203			93	296	237		20					257	94921
1881	198	37	93		328	249	765	27			33		1074	94962
1882	211		64	1	276	303	34	30			41	51	459	101113
1883	219		194	112	525	265	5	12			58	51	391	not given

850 (a)	850
	836
440 (b)	1261

(a) = to provide cemetery £765 (b) = to add to cemetery £346

General and Special expenditure refer to rate-borne costs. Some additional sums spent via loans have been included in the expenditure figures.

The reasons for S. Stamford's low spending are explained in chapter 3, section 2.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

N.B. Books and publications which appear in the general list (as opposed to specific locations) are sometimes rare and hard to locate. In such cases I have added a location coding as follows:-

BPL	Bridgwater Public Library.
CA	Ceredigion Archives, Aberystwyth.
CUL	Cambridge University Library.
MNH	Manx National Heritage Library, Douglas, Isle of Man.
NA	National Archives, Kew, London.
NCL	Northampton Central Library.
NLW	National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.
NRO	Northamptonshire Record Office.
PRO/TNA	Public Record Office/National Archives.
RCM	Rutland County Museum, Oakham.
ROLLR	Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland.
SPL	Stamford Public Library.
UA	Uppingham School Archives.

PRIMARY SOURCES

ARCHIVAL SOURCES

Uppingham School Archives (UA).

(Letters and other individual documents are quoted in the footnotes).

An Act for better supplying with Water the Parish of Uppingham 13 July 1876.

Bell, Dr Thomas, *Letterbook 1876-1904.*

Frowde GC (ed), *Borth Centenary Magazine Summer 1977.*

Haslam, Mrs SLE, *Diary 1871-2.*

Hodgkinson, RJ, *Remarks on Mr Haviland's Report on the Visitation of Fever in
the School and Town of Uppingham 10 February 1876.*

*A letter to the Rev Chancellor Wales in reply to his letter of
February 21st, on the Action of the Uppingham Sanitary
Authority, 25 February 1876.*

Jennings, J.C., *Analysis of Uppingham Church Registers.*

Manor of Preston and Uppingham Court Rolls Vol IV.

Pidcock JH, *A Report Presented to the Uppingham Sewer Authority
Committee, on the Drainage, Water Supply etc, of the
Town, by JH Pidcock Esq., Engineer. May 1871.*

Powell OB, *Some Memories of Edward Thring: Centenary Booklet (1953).*

Rawlinson, Robert, *Uppingham: Town and School Reports 1876.*

Rectory Manor of Uppingham Court Rolls Vols. VI and VIII.

Rectory Manor of Uppingham Suit Rolls and Quit Rent Rolls, Steward's Papers
packet 13, 1853-1880.

Richardson, Nigel, *Files of all photocopied documentation used for this thesis.*

Rigby, Cormac, *Unpublished manuscript of a book on Edward Thring.*

Rome RC, *Uppingham: the Story of a School (undated manuscript).*

- Skrine JH, Diary (undated extract).
- Smith, Barnard, *The Late Visitation of Typhoid Fever in the School and Town of Uppingham: A Statement of the Action of the Sanitary Committee by the Chairman 19 January 1876.*
- Tarbotton MO, *Report to the Trustees and Headmaster of Uppingham School Jan. 1876.*
- Regulations etc for the Drainage of the School Houses 1876.*
- Tate, David, *West Deyne: A Short History* (undated manuscript).
- Thring, Edward, *Addresses* (1887).
- Diaries 1859-62 and 1886-7.
- Notes in copy of the *New Testament*.
- Petition of Edward Thring, Headmaster of Uppingham School, to the Charty Commissioners, 15 April 1878.*
- The Statement of Rev. Edward Thring, Head Master, Addressed to the Patrons and Trustees of Archdeacon Johnson's School in Uppingham Respecting the Organization of the School Dated September 16th 1859.*
- The Elements of Grammar taught in English* (1851).
- Thring, Margaret, Unpublished memoirs.
- Trustees' Minute Books.
- Uppingham School Magazine* 1853-1887 (bound volumes).
- Uppingham School Roll*: Sixth issue (1932).
- Eleventh issue (1997).
- Wales, William, *Letter Announcing his Retirement from Uppingham* (1879).
- A letter to Rev RJ Hodgkinson Touching his Remarks on Mr*

Haviland's Report and the Action of the Sanitary Authority

21 February 1876.

A Rejoinder to the Second Letter of Rev RJ Hodgkinson on the

Action of the Uppingham Sanitary Authority 1876.

Wolfenden, JF, Speech delivered at Uppingham 25 July 1953.

RECORD OFFICES AND LIBRARIES

Ceredigion Archives/Record Office, Aberystwyth (CA).

Borth Burial Records 1870-75.

Borth British Board School Logbook 1864-1883.

Cyforeth y Brenin Census 1871.

Commemorative pamphlet to mark the opening ceremony of the Borth Primary School (1968).

Manx National Heritage Library, Douglas, Isle of Man (MNH)

IOM Census Records 1891 and 1901.

Manx Antiquarian Society Ledger 1892-1908.

Haviland, Alfred, *Consumption, the Social and Geographical Causes conducing
to its Prevalence: Illustrated by a Coloured Map – a Lecture
delivered at the Victoria Hotel, Douglas, 17 December 1883.
The Essential Requisites of a Seaside Health Resort, and the
Requirements of a Health Seeker, with the Physical Geography
and Climate of the Isle of Man – a Lecture Delivered at the*

Masonic Hall, Douglas, 13 June 1883.

‘The Physical Geography of the Isle of Man: Inaugural Address to the Manx Geological Society, established October 1888, Delivered 7 January 1889’, *IOM Times* 26 January 1889.

Inaugural Address on Medical Geography as an aid to Clinical Medicine, also Phthisis and the Isle of Man – Delivered at the First Meeting of the IOM Medical Society, 4 December 1896.

‘Mann or Man? – an Extract from the Report of the Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the IOM Natural History and Antiquarian Society, held at Douglas School of Art’, *IOM Times* 29 March 1888.

‘The Isle of Man and the Glacial Period’, *IOM Times* 16 January 1886.

‘The Manx Climate’, *Lancet* 11 June 1887.

‘The Necessity for Collecting and Arranging the Ascertained Facts Relative to the Glaciation of the Isle of Man’, *IOM Times* 6 February 1886.

‘Peel: Past, Present and Future- a Lecture in Aid of the Sailors’ Shelter and Fishermen’s Refuge’, *IOM Times* 3 May 1884.

Port St Mary as a Health Resort (1891).

Report on the Ballaquayle Building Estate, near Douglas IOM (Douglas, 1886).

‘The Rising of the Sun at the Summer Solstice from Stonehenge’, *Manx Astronomical Society* (1893).

Talbot, Revd T, ‘Mr Haviland’s Lecture Reviewed’, *The Manx Sun*, 29 October

1883.

‘Mr Haviland’s Lecture and its Publication’, *The Manx Sun*, 7,
20 and 26 November, and 4 December 1883.

The National Archives, Kew (PRO/TNA)

Cardiganshire Poor Law correspondence	TNA MH30/20
Local Government Board papers relating to the	
Uppingham Poor Law Union 1860-1882	TNA MH12/9812-3-4-5-6-7.
Local Government reports/general papers 1875-7	TNA MH19/87-88.
Correspondence and papers of the Local	
Government Board 1875-7	TNA MH25/26-27-28.
Public Works Loan Board papers 1835-92.	TNA MH19/190.
Uppingham Poor Law correspondence.	TNA MH30/209.

National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth (NLW)

Condry, William,	Bird Life around Borth: <i>Borth Review</i> (1950).
Jones, Idris M,	Nineteenth Century Borth: <i>Borth Review</i> (1951).
Norrington Davies, John,	<i>A Brief History of St Matthew’s, Borth</i> (2001).

Northampton Central Library (NCL)

Haviland, Alfred,	<i>Report on the Geographical Distribution of Fever within</i> <i>the Area of the Combined Sanitary Authorities in the</i> <i>Counties of Northampton, Leicester, Rutland and Bucks</i> <i>11 July 1874.</i>
-------------------	---

Northamptonshire Record Office (NRO)

Episcopal Visitation: Uppingham 1878 ML598.

Wales, William, *Letter on his Resignation from All Saints, Northampton* (1858).

Oakham Public Library

Jones, Clive, 'Geology in Rutland', *Rutland Natural History Society Annual Report 2000*: (Rutland Library Service Local Studies ref 508.42545, Stamford 2000).

Rutland Local History and Record Society publications,
including editions of *The Rutland Record*.

Record Office of Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (ROLLR)

Burial Registers DE4862/1.

Census Return for Uppingham (1871) RG10/3301-2.

Court Rolls, based on Enclosure Map of 1804 MA/EN/A/R51/1.

Land Tax assessment 1874-5.

A Report of the Sanitary Condition of Leicester in 1875, by J Wyatt Crane MD, Medical Officer of Health.

Return of Owners of Land Vol II: Rutland (HMSO, 1873).

Statement of Expenses in the Restoration
and Enlargement of Uppingham Church DE5430.

Suit Rolls 1853-1880.

Uppingham Land Tax Assessment 1874/5 DE3256/20/29.

Uppingham National School Minute Book DE1784/54.

Uppingham Union Minute Book DE1381/441.

Uppingham Vestry Book 1876-1881.

Vestry Minute Book 1869

DE1784/24.

PRINTED PRIMARY WORKS

- Anon., *Early Days at Uppingham under Edward Thring
by an Old Boy* (1904).
- Bonney, TG, *Memories of a Long Life* (Cambridge, 1921).
- Field, Rogers, *Report to the Sanitary Authority* 6 January 1876.
*Byelaws & Regulations with Reference to House Drainage:
Adopted by the Uppingham RSA and Allowed by the LGB*
(1878). (CUL/UA)
- Haviland, Alfred, *Report on the Late Outbreak of Enteric Fever in
Archdeacon Johnson's School, Uppingham, Rutland:
June-November 1875.* (1875) (CUL/UA)
- Hornung, E W, *Fathers of Men* (1912).
- Hoyland, Geoffrey, *The Man Who Made a School: Thring of Uppingham* (1946).
- J.H.S., *Uppingham by the Sea: A Narrative of the Year at Borth*
(1878).
- Parkin, GR, (ed) *Edward Thring, Headmaster of Uppingham School: Life, Diary
and Letters, 2 vols* (1898).
- Rawnsley, H D, *Edward Thring: Teacher and Poet* (1899).
- Rawnsley, WF, *Edward Thring: Maker of Uppingham School, Headmaster
1853-1887* (1926).
- Skrine, JH, *A Memory of Edward Thring* (1890).
Uppingham by the Sea (1878).

Thring, Edward, *A Sermon for the Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity, October 16th 1887, in Uppingham School Chapel* (CUL/UA).

Addresses (1887).

Borth Lyrics (illustrations by C Rossiter) (Uppingham, 1881).

Education and School (1864).

Poems and Translations (1887).

Presidential Addresses to the Education Society (1886).

School Guidebook (Uppingham, 1874).

School Songs: a Collection of Original and Other Pieces (Uppingham, 1858).

Sermons Preached at Uppingham School: 2 vols, (Cambridge, 1886).

Theory and Practice of Teaching (Cambridge, 1889).

Thoughts on Life-Science (1869).

Government Sources

Accounts and papers: Local Government Taxation – Abstract of Sums Raised and Expended by Rural Sanitary Authorities, and Parliamentary Local Taxation Returns:-

1873-4:	1875	LXII
1874-5:	1876	LXII
1875-6:	1877	LXX
1876-7:	1878	LXIV
1877-8:	1878-9	LX
1878-9:	1880	LXI
1879-80:	1881	LXXVIII

1880-1:	1882	LVII
1881-2:	1883	LVIII
1882-3:	1884	LXVII
1883-4:	1884-5	LXVI

Annual Reports of the Charity Commissioners

1875	XX 13
1876	XX 19

Epidemics in Schools: An Analysis of the Data collected during the First Five Years of a Statistical Inquiry by the School Epidemics Committee, (Medical Research Council Report: HMSO 1938).

Reports of the MOH of the Privy Council and Local Government Board.

The Registrar General's Annual Reports.

The Registrar General's Quarterly Bulletins.

Report of the Commissioners: Schools Inquiry Vol. XVI (North Midland Division).

Contemporary Journals

The British Medical Journal.

The Cantuarian.

Hansard.

The Lancet.

The Medical Officer.

The Medical Register.

The Private Schoolmaster.

The Servants' Magazine.

The Solicitors' Journal.

Newspapers

The Aberystwyth Journal. (NLW).

The Bridgwater Journal. (BPL).

The Cambrian News. (NLW).

The Isle of Man Times.

The Leamington Spa Chronicle.

The Liverpool Daily News.

The Liverpool Post.

The London Gazette.

The Manchester Critic.

The Manchester Guardian.

The Manx Quarterly. (MNH).

The Manx Sun. (MNH).

The Northampton District Chronicle. (NCL).

The Northampton Herald. (NCL).

The Rutland, Oundle and Stamford Post.

The Stamford Mercury. (SPL).

The Times.

The Welsh Gazette. (NLW).

SECONDARY SOURCES

(The place of publication is London unless otherwise indicated.)

Printed Secondary Works

- Ackerknecht, Erwin H, *A Short History of Medicine* (Baltimore/London, 1982).
- Anderson, AM, *The Antiseptic Treatment of Typhoid Fever* (Dundee, 1892).
- Archer, RL, *Secondary Education in the Nineteenth Century* (1960).
- Bamford, TW, *Rise of the Public Schools: A Study of Boys' Public Boarding Schools in England and Wales from 1837 to the Present Day* (1967).
- Barrett, DW, *Life and Work Among the Navvies* (1880).
- Barrett, Frank A, *Disease and Geography: The History of an Idea* (Toronto, 2000).
- Bartrip, PWJ, *Mirror of Medicine: A History of the British Medical Journal* (Oxford, 1990).
- Barty-King, H, *An Illustrated History of Water Supply and Wastewater in the United Kingdom* (1992).
- Bateman, John, *Great Landowners of Britain and Ireland 1876* (Leicester) (1971).
- Bellamy, Christine, *Administering Central-Local Relations, 1871-1919: The Local Government Board in its Fiscal and Cultural Context* (Manchester, 1988).
- Beckett, JV, *The Aristocracy in England* (Oxford, 1986).
- Beckett, JV, *The East Midlands from AD 1000* (Harlow, 1988).
- Bell, David, *Leicestershire and Rutland Privies: a Nostalgic Trip Down the Garden Path* (Newbury, 2000).

- Bennett, Peter, *A Very Desolate Position* (Rossall School, 1977).
- Binnie, GM, *Early Victorian Water Engineers* (1981).
- Bourne, Jill, *Understanding Leicestershire and Rutland Place Names*
(Loughborough, 2003)
- Brand, Jeanne L, *Doctors and the State: the British Medical Profession and
Government Action in Public Health, 1870-1912.* (Baltimore,
1965).
- Brandford, Paul, *Discussions in Environmental Health Planning* (1979).
- Brown, Cynthia, *Northampton 1835-1985: Shire Town, New Town* (Chichester,
1990).
- Browne, GF, *Recollections of a Bishop* (1915).
- Budd, William, *Typhoid Fever: Its Nature, Mode of Spreading, and Prevention*
(1873).
- Burgess, GHO, *The Curious World of Frank Buckland* (1967).
- Cannan, Edwin, *Elementary Political Economy: The History of Local Rates in
England* (1997).
- Carnell, Geoffrey, *The Bishops of Peterborough 1541-1991* (Much Wenlock,
1993). (CUL).
- Cartwright, FF, *The Social History of Medicine* (1997).
- Castle, EB, *Moral Education in Christian times* (1958).
- Charles Jones,) *Historic Cardiganshire Houses and their True Families*
)
Caroline (ed),) (Carmarthen, 2000).
- Chrimes, Mike, *Civil Engineering 1839-1889: a Photographic History* (Stroud,
1991).
- Collins, EJT, (ed), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales, VII, 1850-1914*

- (Cambridge, 2000).
- Copley, Terence, *Black Tom: Arnold of Rugby* (2002).
- Cossons, Arthur, *The Turnpike Roads of Leicestershire and Rutland* (Leicester, 2003).
- Craig, FWS, *Parliamentary Election Results 1832-1885* (Aldershot, 1977).
- Creighton, C, *History of Epidemics in Britain* (Cambridge, 1894) Vol II.
- Curtis, SJ, and) *An Introductory History of English Education since 1880*
)
Boultonwood, MEA,) (1970).
- Daunton, MJ, *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain Vol. III 1840-1959*
(Cambridge, 2000).
- Daunton, MJ, *House and Home in the Victorian City: Working-Class Housing 1850-1914* (1983).
- Davies, John
Norrington, *A Brief History of St. Matthew's, Borth* (Borth, 2001).
- Davies, Terry, *Borth: A Seaborn Village* (Conwy, 2004).
- Digby, Anne, *The Evolution of British General Practice 1850-1948* (Oxford, 1999).
- Making a Medical Living: Doctors and Patients in the English Market for Medicine, 1720-1911* (Cambridge, 1994).
- Digby, Anne, *The Poor Law in Nineteenth Century England and Wales*,
(Historical Association General Series 104: 1982).
- Dowling, HF, *Fighting Infection* (Harvard, 1977).
- Dukes, Clement, *Health at School considered in its Mental, Moral and Physical Aspects* (1887, 1894, 1905).
- Englander, David, *Poverty and Poor Law Reform in Nineteenth Century Britain 1834- 1914: from Chadwick to Booth* (1998).

- Englander, David,) *Retrieved Riches: Social Investigation in Britain 1840-1914*
)
& O'Day, Rosemary,) (1995).
- Ensor, RCK, *England 1870-1914* (Oxford, 1959).
- Everitt, Alan, (ed), *Perspectives in English Urban History* (1973) .
- Eyler, John M, *Sir Arthur Newsholme and State Medicine 1885-1935*
(Cambridge, 1997).
- Victorian Social Medicine: the Ideas and Methods of William Farr* (1979).
- Finer, SE, *The Life and Times of Sir Edwin Chadwick 1800-1890* (1952).
- Flanders, Judith, *The Victorian House: Domestic Life from Childbirth to Deathbed* (2003).
- Fletcher, Sheila, *Feminists and Bureaucrats: A Study in the Development of Girls' Education in the Nineteenth Century* (1980).
- Fraser, D, and
Sutcliffe, A, *The Pursuit of Urban History* (1983).
- Frazer, WM, *Duncan of Liverpool* (1947).
- A History of English Public Health 1834-1939* (1950).
- Frost, Josephine C, *Haviland Genealogy* (New York, 1914).
- Ancestors and Descendants of William Haviland of Newport Rhode Island* (Salem, Mass, USA, 1997).
- Gasquoine, GP, *The Story of the Cambrian* (Wrexham) (1922).
- Gathorne-Hardy,) *Doctors: The Lives and Works of GPs* (1984).
)
Jonathan,) *The Public School Phenomenon* (1977).
- Goodall, Edward W, *William Budd, MD FRS, The Bristol Epidemiologist* (Bristol, 1936)

- Graham, JP, *Forty Years of Uppingham* (1932).
- Grice, J Watson, *National & Local Finance: A Review of the Relations Between the Central and Local Authorities in England, France, Belgium and Prussia, during the Nineteenth Century* (1910).
- Green, CC, *The Coast Lines of the Cambrian Railways* (Didcot, 1993).
- Halliday, Stephen, *The Great Stink of London: Sir Joseph Bazalgette & The Cleansing of the Victorian Capital* (Stroud, 2001).
- Hamlin Christopher, *A Science of Impurity: Water Analysis in Nineteenth Century Britain* (Bristol, 1990).
- Hardy, Anne, *The Epidemic Streets: Infectious Disease and the Rise of Preventive Medicine 1856-1900* (Oxford, 1993).
- Health & Medicine in Britain since 1860* (Basingstoke, 2001).
- Harford-Battersby, CF, *Pilkington of Uganda* (1899).
- Hart Ernest, *Waterborne Typhoid: A Historic Summary of Local Outbreaks in Great Britain and Ireland 1853-1893* (1897).
- A Report on the Influence of Milk in spreading Zymotic Disease* (1897)
- Hart-Davis, Adam, *What the Victorians Did for Us* (2001).
- Hartley, VA, *The Church in Victorian Northampton* (Northampton, 1992).
(NCL)
- Hassan, John, *A History of Water in Modern England and Wales*
(Manchester/New York, 1998).
- Hassan, John, and) *The Politics of Water in Early & Mid-Victorian Britain*
)
Taylor, Peter,) (Manchester Metropolitan University pamphlet 1996).
- Haviland, Alfred, *Climate, Weather and Disease, being a Sketch of the*

- Opinions of the most ancient and modern writers.* (1885).
(CUL).
- Hurried to Death or, a Few Words of Advice on the Dangers of Hurry and Excitement, Especially Addressed to Railway Travellers* (1868) (CUL).
- The Geographical Distribution of Disease in Great Britain* (1875 and 1892).
- The Geographical Distribution of Heart Disease and dropsy, cancer in females and phthisis in females.* (1875).
- Scarborough as a Health Resort* (1883).
- Hennock, EP, *Fit & Proper Persons: Ideal and Reality in Nineteenth Century Government* (1973).
- Hodgkinson, Ruth G, *The Origins of the National Health Service: The Medical Services of the New Poor Law 1834-1871* (1967).
- Holderness,BA, and Turner, M., *Labour, Land and Agriculture, 1700-1920* (1991).
- Honey, JR de S, *Tom Brown's Universe: The Development of the Victorian Public School* (1977).
- Hope Simpson, JB, *Rugby since Arnold: A History of Rugby School from 1842* (1967).
- Hopewell, Jeffrey, *Shire County Guide to Leicestershire and Rutland* (Princes Risborough, 1984).
- Hoppen, K Theodore, *The Mid-Victorian Generation 1846-1886* (Oxford, 1998)
- Hoskins, WG, *Rutland* (1963).
- Howe, G Melvyn, *Man, Environment and Disease in Britain: A Medical Geography Through the Ages* (Newton Abbott, 1972).

- Howkins, Alun, *Reshaping Rural England: A Social History 1850-1925* (1991).
- Hunt, EH, *Regional Wage Variations in Britain, 1850-1914* (Oxford 1973).
- Huckstep, RL, *Typhoid Fever and Other Salmonella Infections* (Edinburgh 1972).
- Irvine, AL, *Sixty Years at School* (Winchester, 1958).
- Jackson, RM, *The Machinery of Local Government* (1967).
- Jarman, SG, *The Bridgwater Infirmary: A Record of its Rise and Progress* (St. Ives, 1890) (BPL).
- Jarman, SG, *A History of Bridgwater* (Bridgwater, 1889). (BPL).
- Jenkins, Andrew, *Rutland: A Portrait in Old Picture Postcards* (Seaford, 1993).
- Jenkins GH, and Jones IG, *Cardiganshire County History Vol. 3* (Cardiff, 1988).
- Lambert, Royston, *Sir John Simon 1816-1904 and English Social Administration* (1963).
- Leinster-Mackay,) *The Educational World of Edward Thring* (1987).
)
Donald,) *The Rise of the English Prep. School* (1984).
- Lewis, WJ, *Born on a Perilous Rock: Aberystwyth Past and Present* (Aberystwyth, 1980).
- Loudon, Irvine, *Medical Care and the General Practitioner 1750-1850* (Oxford, 1986).
- MacDonagh, O, *Early Victorian Government 1830-1870* (1977).
- Macleod, Roy, (ed), *Government and Expertise: Specialists, Administrators and Professionals 1860-1919* (Cambridge, 2003).
- Mangan, JA, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School* (Cambridge, 1981).

- Matthews, Bryan, *The Book of Rutland* (Buckingham, 1978).
- By God's Grace: A History of Uppingham School*
(Maidstone, 1984).
- May, John, *Reference Wales* (Cardiff, 1994. (NLW).
- McConnell, James, *English Public Schools* (1985).
- McCrum, Michael, *Thomas Arnold: Head Master - A Reassessment* (Oxford, 1989).
- McKeown, Thomas, *The Modern Rise of Population* (1976).
- Meadows, Bill) *Leicestershire and Rutland: a portrait in colour* (Newbury,
)
and Waites, Bryan,) 1997).
- Medical Officers of Schools' Association, *The Handbook of School Health* (1884) (CUL).
- Mee, Arthur, *Leicestershire & Rutland* (Rotherham, 1997).
- Metcalfe, Warwick, *Uppingham: A Picture Book of a Unique School* (Uppingham, 1995).
- Meyrick, SM, *A History of Cardiganshire* (Brecon 1907) (NLW).
- Millward, Roy, *A History of Leicestershire and Rutland* (Chichester, 1985).
- Milner, Thomas, *Letter to the Revd. W Wales in Reply to that Gentleman's Sermon* (Northampton, 1838) (CUL).
- Mingay, GE, *The Victorian Countryside*, 2 vols. (1981).
- Moberly, CAE (ed), *George Moberly's Journal* (1849) (1916).
- Newman, Bernard, *Portrait of the Shires* (1968).
- Newsome, David, *A History of Wellington College 1859- 1959* (1959).
- Godliness & Good Learning: Four Studies on a Victorian Ideal* (1961).
- Newton, David,) *The Stamford Mercury: Three Centuries of Newspaper*

-)
and Smith, Martin,) *Publishing* (Stamford, 1999).
- Palmer, Roy, *Folklore of Leicestershire and Rutland* (Wymondham, 1985).
- Paul, J. Ann, *3000 Strangers: Navy Life on the Kettering to Manton Railway* (Kettering, 2003).
- Peach, Alfred, *A Brief Account of the Uppingham Congregational Church and of the Fifty Years' Ministry of Rev. John Green* (Bournemouth, 1914).
- Pelling, Margaret, *Cholera, Fever and English Medicine 1825-1865* (Oxford, 1978).
- Percival, Alicia, *Very Superior Men: Some Early Public School Headmasters and their Achievements* (1973).
- The Origins of the Headmasters' Conference* (1969).
- Potter, Jeremy, *Headmaster: The Life of John Percival, Radical Aristocrat* (1997).
- Porter, Dorothy, *Health, Civilisation and the State* (1999).
- Porter, Roy, *Blood and Guts: A Short History of Medicine* (2002).
- The Greatest Benefit to Mankind: A Medical History of Humanity from Antiquity to the Present* (1997).
- Pyatt, HR, *Fifty Years of Fettes* (1931).
- Reay, Barry, *Microhistories: Demography, Society and Culture in Rural England, 1800-1930* (Cambridge, 1996).
- Redlich, Joseph, and Hirst, FW, *The History of Local Government in England* (1970).
- Reynolds, R, *Cleanliness and Godliness: Or The Further Metamorphosis* (1943).

- Rivington, Walter, *The Medical Profession , being the Essay that was Awarded the First Carmichael Prize of £200 by the Council of the Royal College of Surgeons, Ireland 1879* (Dublin, 1879)(CUL).
- Robins, FW, *The Story of Water Supply* (Oxford, 1946).
- Rogers, Alan, *The Book of Stamford* (Buckingham, 1983).
The Making of Stamford (Leicester, 1965).
The Making of Uppingham as illustrated in its Topography and Buildings (Uppingham, 2003).
- Rosen, G, *A History of Public Health* (New York, 1993).
- Rutland Record Soc. *Who was Who in Rutland* (Oakham, 1988) (RCM).
- Pevsner, Nikolaus, *Leicestershire and Rutland* (Harmondsworth, 1960).
- Sanderson, Michael, *Education, Economic Change and Society in England 1780-1870* (1991).
- Saville, J, *Rural Depopulation in England and Wales 1851-1951* (1957).
- Serjeantson, RJ, *A History of the Church of All Saints, Northampton* (Northampton, 1901) (NCL).
- Simmons, Jack, *Life in Victorian Leicester* (Leicester, 1971). (LRO).
- Simms, TH, *The Rise of a Midland Town, Rugby, 1800-1900* (Rugby, 1949).
- Simon, Bryan, and) *The Victorian Public School: Studies in the Development*
Bradley, Ian,) *of an Educational Institution* (Dublin, 1975).
- Simpson, JH, *Schoolmaster's Harvest* (1954).
- Smellie, KB, *A History of Local Government* (1946).
- Smith, FB, *The People's Health 1830-1910* (1979).
- Simon, Sir John, *English Sanitary Institutions* (1897).

- Smith, Barnard, *Arithmetic and Algebra in their Principles and Application* (Cambridge, 1853) (CUL).
- Arithmetic for Schools* (Cambridge, 1860) (CUL).
- Observations on the Ecclesiastical Dilapidations Act 1871 with a View to its Amendment or More Efficient Operation* (Cambridge, 1872).
- Smith, Martin, *The Story of Stamford* (Stamford, 1994).
- Smout, TC, *The Search for Wealth and Stability: Essays in Economic and Social History Presented to MW Flinn* (London 1979).
- Squibbs, Philip J, *A Bridgwater Diary 1800-1967* (Bridgwater, 1968) (BPL).
- Stranack, David, *Schools at War: A Story of Education, Evacuation and Endurance in the Second World War* (Chichester, 2005).
- Stray, Christopher, *Classics Transformed: Schools, Universities and Society in England, 1830-1960* (Oxford, 1998).
- Sutherland, Gillian, *Studies in the Growth of Nineteenth-Century Government* (1972).
- Szreter, Simon, *Fertility, Class and Gender in Britian 1860-1940* (Cambridge, 1996).
- The Importance of Social Intervention in Britain's Mortality Decline c1850-1914: A Re-Interpretation* (Centre for Economic Policy Research Discussion Paper, 1986).
- Topley, WWC, and Wilson, GS, *Principles of Bacteriology, Virology and Immunology* (1975).
- Tozer, Malcolm, *Physical Education at Thring's Uppingham* (Uppingham, 1976) (UA).

- Traylen, Tony,) *Turnpikes and Royal Mail of Rutland* (Stamford, 1982).
 (comp),) *Oakham in Rutland* (Stamford, 1982).
Uppingham in Rutland (Stamford, 1982).
- Tyerman, Christopher, *A History of Harrow School 1324-1991* (Oxford, 2001).
- Uppingham Local) *Canon Aldred's Historical Notes* (Uppingham, 1999).
 History Studies Group,) *Uppingham in 1802: A Year to Remember?*
 (Uppingham, 2002).
Uppingham in 1851: A Night in the Life of a Thriving Town
 (Uppingham, 2001).
*Uppingham at War: Uppingham in Living Memory: snapshots
 of Uppingham in the twentieth century* (Uppingham, 2005)
- Vaughan, Herbert, *Squires of South Wales* (1926) (NLW).
- Von Glehn, L, *Life and Letters of Mandell Creighton – by His Wife* (2 vols)
 (1904).
- Wales, William, *A Lecture Delivered in National School Room, Northampton to
 the Members and Friends of the Society, for the Diffusion of
 Religious and Useful Knowledge, Explanatory of the Nature
 and Objects of that Institution* (Northampton, 1839). (CUL)
*The Minister's Duty Towards Himself and his People: a
 Sermon preached in St. Giles's Church, Northampton, at the
 Visitation of the Rt. Revd. the Lord Bishop of Peterborough,
 August 6th 1851* (1851). (CUL)
- Walker, TA, *Admissions to Peterhouse or S Peter's College in the
 University of Cambridge: A Biographical Register* (Cambridge,
 1912).

- Waller, PJ, *Town, City and Nation* (Oxford, 1983).
- Webb, Sidney,) *English Poor Law History: The Last Hundred years* (3 vols)
)
and Webb, Beatrice,) (1929).
- Wesley, John, *On Dress: A Sermon on I Peter III, 3,4:* (Boston, 1811) (CUL).
- Wohl, Anthony S, *Endangered Lives* (1983).
- Woods, Abigail, *A Manufactured Plague? The History of Foot and Mouth
Disease in Britain* (2004).
- Wright, Lawrence, *Clean & Decent: the Fascinating History of the Water Closet*
(1960).
- Wright, RS, and) *An Outline of Local Government and Local Taxation in*
)
Hobhouse, Henry,) *England and Wales* (1884).

Published Articles

- Bamford, TW, Public School Town in the Nineteenth Century, *British Journal of Education Studies* (1957): 25-36.
- Barrett, Frank, Alfred Haviland's nineteenth century map analysis of the geographical distribution of disease in England and Wales, *Social Science and Medicine* 46 No. 6 (1998): 767-781.
- Dickie, Marie, Liberals, Radicals and Socialists in Northampton before the Great War, *Northamptonshire Past and Present* Vol. VII, I, (1983-4): 51-54.
- Falkus, Malcolm, The Development of municipal trading in the nineteenth century, *Business History* XIX 2 (1977): 139-146.
- Foster, M, The Growth of the Local Government Board, *The Nineteenth Century and after* L111 (1903): 107-112.

- Freeman, TW, Nineteenth Century Medical Geographer: *Geographical Magazine* X (1978): 90.
- Guha, S, The Importance of Social Intervention in England's Mortality Decline: The Evidence Reviewed, *Social History of Medicine* 7 No. 1 (1994): 89-113.
- Hamlin, Christopher, Mudding in Bumbledom: on the Enormity of Large Sanitary Improvements in Four British towns 1855-1885, *Victorian Studies* 32 (1988): 55-83.
- Sanitary Policing and the Local State, 1873-1874: A Statistical Study of English and Wales Towns, *Social History of Medicine* 18 No. 1 (2005): 37-61.
- Hardy, Anne, On the Cusp: Epidemiology and Bacteriology at the Local Government Board 1890-1905, *Medical History* 42 (1998): 328-346.
- Parish Pump to Private Pipes: London's Water Supply in the Nineteenth Century, in Bynum, W F, and Porter, Roy, Living and Dying in London, *Medical History, Supplement 11*, *Welcome Institute for the History of Medicine* (1991): 76-93.
- Water and the Search for Public Health in London in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries, *Medical History* 28 (1984): 250-282.
- Hassan, John A, The Growth and Impact of the British Water Industry in the Nineteenth Century, *Economic History Review* 38 (1985): 521-547.

- Haviland, Alfred, Abstract of Two lectures on The Geographical Distribution of Typhoid Fever in England and Wales: a lecture delivered at St Thomas's Hospital, London *British Medical Journal* (10 Feb 1872).
- Haw, George, The Local Government Board, *Contemporary Review* XCIV (1908): 54-63.
- Hennock EP, Finance and Politics in Urban Local Government in England 1835-1900, *Historical Journal* VI, 2 (1963): 212-225.
- Holderness, BA., Agricultural Responses to the 'Depression' of the Late Nineteenth Century in England and France: Towards a Comparative History, *Paper presented to IV Congresso di Storia dei Movimenti Contadini –L'Agricoltura en Europa e la masita della 'questione agrarian' 1880—1914* (Rome, 1993).
- Hurren, Elizabeth T, Poor Law Versus Public Health: Diphtheria, Sanitary Reform, and the 'Crusade' Against Outdoor Relief 1870-1900, *Social History of Medicine* 18 No. 3 (2005): 399-418.
- Lambert, Royston, The Local Government Act Office, *Victorian Studies* 6 No. 1 (1962): 121-150.
- Lawes, John, Voluntary Schools and Basic Education in Northampton 1800-1871, *Northamptonshire Past and Present* VI, 2 (1979-80): 85-91.
- Luckin, W, The Final Catastrophe – Cholera in London, 1866, *Medical History* 21 (1977): 32-42.

- Macleod, Roy M, Treasury Control and Social Administration: A Study of Establishment Growth at the Local Government Board 1871-1905, (*Occasional papers on Social Administration* 23, 1968).
- MacDonagh, Oliver, The 19th Century Revolution in Government: A Reappraisal, *Historical Journal* I, Nos. 1, 2 (1958): 52-67.
- Maltbie MR, The English Local Government Board, *Political Science Quarterly* 13 (1903): 232-258.
- Millward, R, Privatisation in Historical Perspective: the UK water industry, in D Cobham, R Harrington and G Zis, (eds), *Money, Trade and Payments; Essays in Honour of DJ Coppock* (1989): 201-4.
- Mooney, Graham, Private Practice: The Contested Development of Compulsory Infectious Disease Notification in Late-Nineteenth-Century Britain, *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 73 (1999): 238-267.
- Professionalisation in Public Health and the Measurement of Sanitary Progress in Nineteenth-Century England and Wales, *Social History of Medicine* 10 No. 1: 53-78.
- Morris, RJ, The Friars and Paradise: an Essay in the Building History of Oxford 1801-1861, *Oxoniensia* 36 (1971): 72-98.
- Parkin GR, Uppingham: An ancient school worked on modern ideas, *The Century Magazine* XXXVI No. 5 (1888): 643-657.
- Pattenden, Philip,)The Snuffing of Sanitary Smith: Fellow and Senior Bursar,
)
and Thomson, Auriol,) *Peterhouse Annual Record* 2002-3 (Cambridge, 2005): 43-56.

- Richardson, Nigel, A True Life: an Article on the Centenary of the Death of Edward Thring, *The Times Educational Supplement* (16 October 1987).
- Richardson, Nigel, Uppingham by the Sea: Typhoid and the Excursion to Borth, *Rutland Record* 21 (2003): 22-37. (RCM).
- Rogers, Alan, Prosperous – But Precarious: Mortgages in the Local Economy of Uppingham in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries, *Family and Community History* 8/2, (Nov. 2005): 105-122.
- Ross, William A, The Local Government Board and After: Retrospect, *Public Administration* 13 (1956): 17-25.
- Royle, Edward, Charles Bradlaugh, Freethought and Northampton, *Northamptonshire Past and Present* VI, 3 (1979-80): 141-150.
- Stern, WM, Water Supply in Britain: The Development of a Public Service, *Royal Sanitary Institute Journal* LXXIV (1954): 999-1005.
- Szreter, Simon, The Importance of Social Intervention in Britain's Mortality Decline c.1850-1914: a Re-interpretation of the Role of Public Health, *Social History of Medicine* 1 No. 1 (1988): 1-37.
- Szreter, Simon and Mooney, Graham, Urbanization, Mortality, and the Standard of Living Debate: New Estimates of the Expectation of Life at Birth in Nineteenth-Century British Cities, *Economic History Review*, LI, 1 (1998): 84-112.
- Tozer, Malcolm, Thring at Uppingham-by-the-Sea: The Lessons of the Borth Sermons, *History of Education Society Bulletin* 36 (1985): 39-44.

Education for True Life: A Review of Thring's Educational Aims and Methods *History of Education Society Bulletin* 39 (1987): 24-31.

The Great Educational Experiment: Edward Thring at Uppingham School, *Rutland Record* 12 (1992) (RCM).

Watson, JNP, Britain's Oldest Family Hunt? – The Gogerddan, *Country Life Magazine* (29 January 1976): 228-229.

Unpublished Theses

Balls FE, The Origins of the Endowed Schools Act 1869 (Cambridge Ph.D., 1964).

Cambridge, NA, The Life and Times of Dr Alfred Carpenter 1825-1892 (London D.Med., 2002).

Goschl K, A Comparative Study of Public Health in Wakefield, Halifax and Doncaster 1865-1914 (Cambridge Ph.D., 1999).

Hurren, Elizabeth T, 'The Bury-al Board': Poverty, Politics and Poor Relief in the Brixworth Union, Northamptonshire c 1870-1900 (Leicester Ph.D., 2000).

Rigby, Cormac, The Life and Influence of Edward Thring (Oxford D.Phil., 1968).

Snow, SJ, John Snow MD 1813-1858: The Emergence of the Medical Profession (Keele, Ph.D., 1995).

Thomson, Auriol, A Study of Roles and Relationships in a Rutland Village in the Mid Victorian Period: Glaston c1860-90 (Leicester MA in English Local History, 1999).

- Watkins, Dorothy, The English Revolution in Social Medicine 1889-1911
 (London Ph.D., 1984).
- Wilkinson, Anne, The Beginnings of Disease Control in London (Oxford D.Phil.,
 1980).
- Young, RFKJ, Sanitary Administration under Local Government Board
 1871-8 (Oxford B.Litt., 1964).

General Works of Reference

- Sebastian, Anton, *Dictionary of the History of Medicine*, (New York, 1999).
- Barker's *Leicestershire and Rutland Directory* (1875) (ROLLR).
- Chambers Encyclopaedia*.
- Cross, FL, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford, 1963)
- Foster, Joseph, *Alumni Oxonienses* (Oxford, 1888).
- Harrod's *Directory of Leicestershire & Rutland* (1870) (ROLLR).
- Hay, D, *The Oxford Companion to Local and Family History*
 (Oxford, 1996).
- Hook, WF, *A Church Dictionary* (1887).
- Hunter's *Directory* (1848) (BPL).
- Kelly's *Directory for Leicester and Rutland* (1876) (ROLLR).
- Kelly's *Directory for Northamptonshire* (1869) (NRO).
- Kiple, Kenneth F, (ed), *The Cambridge Historical Dictionary of Disease* (2003).
- Lewis, Samuel, *A Topographical Dictionary of England* Vol. 4 (18+8).
- Longden, Revd HI, *Northampton and Rutland Clergy from 1850* (Northampton,
 1941) (NRO).
- Matkins *Almanac* (1924) (ROLLR).

The Medical Who's Who.

The (New) Dictionary of National Biography (2005).

Page, William (ed), *The Victoria County History of Rutland* (1935).

Phillimore, R, *The Ecclesiastical Law of the Church of England* (1895).

Richardson, John, *The Local Historian's Encyclopaedia* (Letchworth 1986).

Stenton, Michael, (ed), *Who's Who of British Members of Parliament Vol 1 1832-1885* (Hassocks, 1976).

Stephens, WB, *Sources for English Local History* (1994).

Tate, WE, *The Parish Chest: A Study of the Records of Parochial Administration in England* (1969).

Venn, John, *Alumni Cantabrigienses: A Biographical List of All Known*

and Venn, JA, (comp), *Students, Graduates and Holders of Office at the University of Cambridge, from the Earliest Times to 1900* (Cambridge, 1947).

Walford, Edward, *The County Families of the United Kingdom* (1895).

Who was Who.

Wright, CN, *Commercial and General Directory of Leicestershire and Rutland* (1880. (ROLLR).